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Tajibmai is MGT season 1 first place winner. PAGE 3

Hafa Adai!

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Former Imperial Pacific and Hengsheng Group junket executive deemed head of criminal syndicate by mainland China court

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC's unfinished Imperial Pacific Resort in Garapan is shown in this file photo.

By PIERCE CHAN
Inside Asian Gaming

Ji Xiaobo, the former Macau junket executive who oversaw controversial Saipan casino operator Imperial Pacific International (IPI), has been deemed to be the head of a "criminal syndicate" by a Beijing court.

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IN CASE AGAINST FORMER OFFICIAL

IPI aware, but mum of court's decision

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Imperial Pacific International (CNMI) LLC manager/director Howyo Chi said yesterday that they are aware of a Beijing Court's decision that found IPI's former project director to be involved in criminal activities.

In response to *Saipan Tribune*'s inquiry about the Beijing Court's decision, Chi said IPI will have no comments at this time.

The Beijing Municipal First Intermediate People's Court ruled on Nov. 24, 2023, that Ji Xiaobo, the former executive of Macau junket firm, Hengsheng Group, and project director for IPI, was deemed head of a criminal syndicate.

Howyo Chi

(See related story).

Commonwealth Casino Commission board chair Edward C. DeLeon Guerrero also has yet to comment on the matter.

DeLeon Guerrero set the CCC board's regular monthly

See IPI on Page 4

'Amount of infrastructure CNMI is losing fast is scary'

» **Quichocho says some key retailers pulling out is alarming for hotel or tourism industry**

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Hotel Association of the NMI chair Ivan Quichocho finds it alarming that some of those in the retail industry in the CNMI that have reopened have chosen to close

See AMOUNT on Page 4

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
Hotel Association of the NMI chair Ivan Quichocho in this screen grab from YouTube talks about the retailers segment and the hotel industry's current situation during a meeting among officials from HANMI, Saipan Chamber of Commerce, and some members of the House of Representatives, in the House chamber Monday.

Magofna: Earnings from revenue-generating bills may not be realized

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Sen. Corina L. Magofna (Ind-Saipan) is deeply concerned that the projected earnings from certain revenue generating bills will not be realized within the timeframe that they had hoped to see.

"As of today, these revenue generating bills have yet to be enacted into law. Additionally, I'm not sure when or if these bills will even pass both the House and the Senate

See MAGOFNA on Page 4

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
Sen. Corina L. Magofna (Ind-Saipan) expresses her concern in this screen grab from YouTube that the revenues projected from pending revenue generating bills will not be realized within the targeted timeframe, during the Senate emergency session on Monday.

INSIDE

NATION
Former President Donald Trump threatened over the weekend to reopen the contentious fight over the Affordable Care Act.
PAGE 11

WORLD
Israel and Hamas agreed to extend their cease-fire for two more days past Monday.
PAGE 12

LIFE & STYLE
In an age of deepfakes and post-truth, as artificial intelligence rose and Elon Musk turned Twitter into X, the Merriam-Webster word of the year for 2023 is "authentic."
PAGE 14

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

GOT A NEWS TIP? TEL: 235-6397 / 235-2440 FAX: 235-3740 EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

Senate fails to override Palacios' veto of allotments for utility costs

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With three senators absent, the Senate failed to override Gov. Arnold I. Palacios' line-item veto of the allotments for the utility costs of Tinian, Rota, Saipan, and Northern Islands in the Fiscal Year 2024 Appropriations Act, or the budget law.

With five senators voting "yes" to a motion to override the governor's veto and Sen. Corina L. Magofna (Ind-Saipan) voting "no," the Senate failed to get the two-thirds vote needed to successfully pass the motion last Monday.

Absent at the special session were Sens. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan), Paul A. Manglona (Ind-Rota), and Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota).

Those who voted "yes" were Senate President Edith E. DeLeon Guerrero (D-Saipan), Sens. Karl Rosario King-Nabors (R-Tinian), Francisco Q. Cruz (R-Tinian), Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian), and Dennis James C. Mendiola (R-Rota).

Before voting "yes," DeLeon Guerrero noted that the fiscal year 2024 conference committee for both House of Representatives and Senate agreed that the utilities expenses will be shouldered by the central government.

"We must mean and hold what we say on these agreements. We are elected officials," DeLeon Guerrero said.

She said they made that agreement and the product came out in their Conference Committee report dated Sept. 23, 2023. DeLeon Guerrero said there must be efforts initiated to identify possible funding for utilities, such as federal grants under allowable local administrative expenses or locations.

The budget legislation, House Bill 23- 66, HS1, SS 2, CC S1, became a law when Palacios signed it on Sept. 30, 2023.

Palacios disapproved a subsection on Section 601 as he emphasized that, although he has been given 100% reprogramming authority over the appropriation for the Executive Branch, the budget bill severely limits what he can chip off the skeleton appropriation to close the budget gap for all under-appropriated programs, including the underfunded utilities expenditure for the Executive Branch departments and agencies.

$10K bail for man accused of robbery

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI Superior Court has imposed a $10,000 cash bail on a man accused of robbing a poker arcade.

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho imposed Monday a $10,000 cash bail on Oliver Castro, 33, who was allegedly caught on surveillance camera robbing Royal Poker in Afetnas on Thanksgiving Day.

Following his bail hearing last Monday, Castro was remanded back to Department of Corrections custody and was ordered to return to court for a preliminary hearing on Dec. 6 at 10am. He will be arraigned on Dec. 11 at 9am.

Assistant public defender Molly Dennert was appointed to represent Castro, while assistant attorneys general Carmen Borja and David Karch appeared for the government.

According to the court documents that charged Castro with robbery, he was seen on surveillance footage acquired from Royal Poker robbing the cashier at Royal Poker on Thanksgiving night.

Police noted that they already had a mugshot of Castro from a previous offense and when the photo was brought to the cashier, she picked his photo out of a lineup

The cashier explained that she knew Castro as he is a regular customer.

Police stated in their report that, based on the surveillance camera footage at Royal Poker, Castro entered the gaming establishment at around 7:35pm on Nov. 23.

In an interview with the cashier, she told police that Castro went to the cashier booth to change some money. However, while she was changing his money, Castro allegedly entered the booth and tried to grab the money the cashier was holding in her hands.

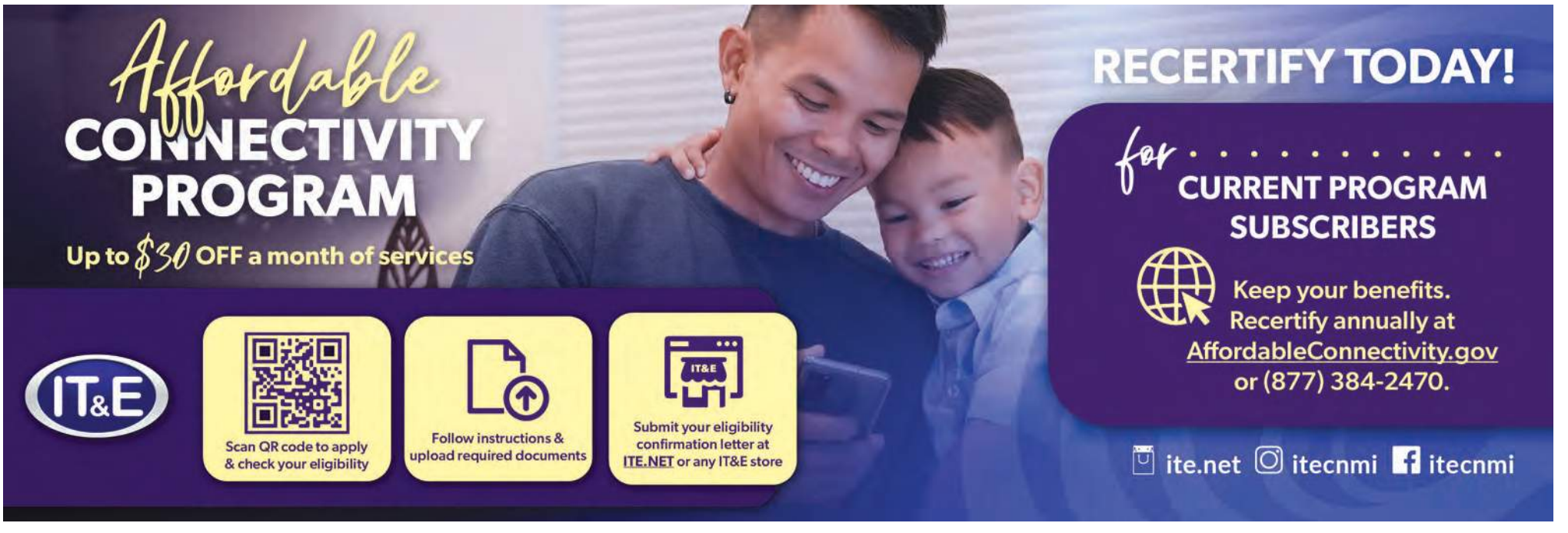
The cashier said she moved quickly, but stumbled backwards and hit the wall. Castro then approached the cashier again and grabbed the cash in her hand.

Police said the defendant tried to grab more money from the cashier, but she pushed him away.

As Castro was trying to exit the establishment, the cashier followed him in an attempt to get the money back.

The two struggled for the cash all the way to the aracde's door but Castro managed to push the cashier away and took off with the money.

Outside the poker, Castro was seen getting into his truck and driving off.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Tajibmai is MGT season 1 first place winner

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Marianas Performing Arts Competition Corp. Marianas Got Talent board members pose with Season 1 finalists, judges, and the competition's Top 3 at the grand finale show last Sunday at the Saipan World Resort in Susupe.

By CHRYSTAL MARINO
chrystal_marino@saipantribune.com
CORRESPONDENT

Bringing the first season of Marianas Got Talent to an end, three of the Marianas' own were named contest winners at the grand finale show at Saipan World Resort in Susupe on Sunday.

With the finalists singing two numbers, one of which was picked by the contest judges, Sebastian Tajibmai took it all the way home with his rendition of Calum Scott's Y*ou Are the Reason* and his own original piece, *They Don't Shine*, which he performed with his band, Nesian Harmony. Tajibmai's numbers moved both the crowd and judges to tears and earned him the MGT Season One winner title as well as the $1,500 prize.

Donato Santiago won second place and a $1,300 prize. Winning $1,100, Bernice Shane Sabino came in third with her massive vocals.

Along with the season's winners, Donovan P. Castro was awarded the People's Choice Award for having the most activity on his Facebook video at the semifinals.

The finale itself was a grand spectacle, including performances by the 14 finalists and judges Tom Basa and Leo Pangelinan. The venue was not only packed with an estimated 600 people, it was also alive with shrieking cheers and signs of support for the 14 finalists. There were also 189 virtual attendees watching live via Facebook.

Aside from Tajibmai, Sabino, and Santiago, great performances were carried out by the other finalists: Jessel Antonio, Ronilo de Belen, Arriane Antonio, Raniel Santos, Azenith Madelo-Avila, Lorenzy Leo, Zoe Stephanson, Donovan Castro, Dwayne Castro, Dean Borja, and Robby Murillo.

Tajibmai later told *Saipan Tribune* he is stunned and feels emotional because he had not been expecting to win first place

"Actually I was banking on third place," he laughed.

Tajibmai shared that his goal from the start was to encourage other talented people to showcase their skills, and now, with some people—even total strangers—coming up to him and appreciating him is so meaningful.

CHRYSTAL MARINO

The Marianas Performing Arts Competition Corp.'s Marianas Got Talent Season 1 first place winner Sebastian Tajibmai singing at the grand finale show last Sunday at the Saipan World Resort in Susupe.

CHRYSTAL MARINO

The Marianas Performing Arts Competition Corpo.'s Marianas Got Talent Season 1 third place winner Bernice Sabino singing at the grand finale show last Sunday at the Saipan World Resort in Susupe.

"It let me know that I am making progress and we're getting somewhere," he said.

He expressed gratitude to all his supporters and family that had been with him since the start of his MGT journey, and all his fellow contestants and MGT staff. He feels like he had gained family and friends for life. "I appreciate you all. I wouldn't have the confidence to go on stage without the support of my people, so thank you," he said.

Although MGT is currently planning which national TV competitions the winners will be going to, wherever that may be, Tajibmai says he plans to remain true and stick to originals, whether doing his own songs or covers with his own twist.

CHRYSTAL MARINO

The Marianas Performing Arts Competition Corp.'s Marianas Got Talent Season 1 second place winner Donato Santiago singing at the grand finale show last Sunday at the Saipan World Resort in Susupe.

COMMONWEALTH ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (CEDA)
2390 Beach Road Oleai, Unit 205 I P.O. Box 502149, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel: (670) 234-6245 / 6293 / 7146 I Fax: (670) 235-7147

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

POSITION:	**COMPTROLLER**
TERM:	Exempt, two-year contract
LOCATION:	SAIPAN, NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS
ANNUAL SALARY:	Minimum $70,000.00
EXAMINATION ANNOUNCEMENT:	HR 2023-03
OPENING DATE:	October 16, 2023
CLOSING DATE:	**UNTIL FILLED** We advise applying as soon as possible as we may close the vacancy early.

Information for this vacancy announcement can be found on our website at https://developcnmi.com/jva.html and by scanning the QR code below.

For inquiries on the vacancy announcement, please contact Manuel A. Sablan, Executive Director at (670) 234-6245 ext. 311 or by email at m.sablan@developcnmi.com.

/s/ Manuel A. Sablan
Executive Director

Located at the Armatech Building in Chalan Kanoa across the intersection leading to the U.S. Post Office. For reservations or for more information, call 234-8894, 287-8895 and 488-8899.

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Attorney for Petitioner Oscar C. Torres

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF:	] Civil Action] No.: 22-0172-CV]
SIMEON EVANGELISTA TAISACAN, Decedent.	] **NOTICE OF HEARING**]]

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that Administratrix Mahaela Manglona's Second Petition forPartial Distribution will be heard before the Honorable Joseph N. Camacho, Associate Judge, on the 14th day of December, 2023, at 10:00 a.m., at the Superior Court for the Northern Mariana Islands, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All persons interested are hereby notified to appear at the hearing and show cause, if any, why the petition should not be granted.

For further particulars, please refer to the Petition on file herein, or contact counsel for Petitioner, Joey P. San Nicolas, P.O. Box 10,001 PMB 602, Saipan, MP 96950; telephone (670) 234-7659 and email jpsn@sannicolaslaw.net.

Dated this 28th day of November, 2023.

Hon. JOSEPH N. CAMACHO
Associate Judge

Hazardous marine conditions expected thru most of the week

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The National Weather Service in Guam has reported that the Marianas is expected to see a trade-wind surge throughout most of this week which will keep marine conditions hazardous.

According to NWS' weekly regional weather outlook, a trade-wind surge expected to last throughout most of this week will keep marine conditions hazardous for small craft and will cause a high risk of rip currents along east facing reefs through at least Thursday.

"Breezy to strong trade-winds will continue to move across Guam and the CNMI this week. This will maintain hazardous marine conditions for small craft and keep the risk of rip currents high along east facing reefs through at least Thursday," said the report.

"Winds across most of Micronesia will be moderate to fresh, 15-20 kt, while the stronger trade-winds, 20-25 kt, remain to the north of 10N, between the Marianas and Wake Island. Trade-wind swell and wind waves of 5-8 feet will continue across the region, especially around the Marianas due to stronger winds. Islands farther north could see combined seas near nine feet," NWS added.

As for the rest of Micronesia, NWS said to expect periods of showers and isolated thunderstorms associated with trade-wind convergence across the region, while stronger winds look to remain north of 10N, near the Marianas and Wake Island.

"For Chuuk, Pohnpei, Kosrae, and the Marshall Islands, trade-wind convergence is generating showers and isolated thunderstorms across most of the region. The western extent of this convergence will occasionally push into Yap and Palau, and will bring periods of scattered showers and a few thunderstorms," said the report.

For more information, feel free to visit NWS Guam.

MAGOFNA

From page 1

and enacted into law by the governor," said Magofna during the Senate emergency session on Monday.

This comes soon after the Senate failed to override Gov. Arnold I. Palacios' line-item veto of the allotments for the utility costs of Tinian, Rota, Saipan, and Northern Islands in the budget law for fiscal year 2024.

Magofna was the only one of six senators present who voted "no" for the override. Three senators, however, were absent so the Senate failed to muster the needed two-third votes needed for the override.

Magofna explained at the session that she cannot in good conscience transfer the additional financial obligation to the Executive Branch, given the current status of the pending revenue generating bills.

Magofna said the motion to override the governor's veto places them all in a double-edged sword situation—regardless of which way they vote, there will be disappointments and disagreements.

"But that's a given because this is part of our job. And I see and understand both sides of the arguments and justifications," she said.

At the end of the day, Magofna said, she has to make a conscious decision that is sound and rational, but most importantly, render a vote that would give people a sense of hope, stability, and confidence that they—as elected leaders—are doing everything within their abilities and authority to find amicable and diplomatic solutions for everyone's benefit.

She pointed out that the agreement between the House of Representatives and Senate conferees during the budget conference pertaining to the allocation for utilities came with the assumption that the House will introduce revenue generating bills. Magofna said the House has done so to help supplement and fill the gaps in the budgetary shortfalls.

Magofna noted that she reached out to several department heads to get some information so that she can make a sound and rational decision.

She disclosed that after having communications with agencies such as the Department of Labor, Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, and the Aging Office on Saipan, she has learned that they are already taking actions to help Tinian.

"I've been provided a purchase order from the Aging Office to show me that they are taking actions to help pay for the utilities of Tinian so that their office on Tinian will not be disconnected," she said.

Magofna said she is confident that the Palacios-Apatang administration will not turn its back on Tinian or Rota when it comes down to the health, safety, and welfare of people.

Sen. Francisco Q. Cruz (R-Tinian) said that, as an alternate member of the Senate conference committee during the budget deliberations, he witnessed what both sides had agreed.

Cruz said the governor told the Legislature when he submitted the proposed budget that $1.8 million will be put under public programs for utility.

"And I believe that he can use that. I'm not sure how much exactly for the entire CNMI," he said.

For that reason, Cruz said, he supports the 100% reprogramming authority for the governor because he knows there's money coming in from reimbursements. Cruz said the governor can use that reprogramming authority to subsidize utilities.

Sen. Dennis James C. Mendiola (R-Rota) said this is the second time they had a veto that deals with the municipalities of Rota and Tinian. Mendiola said it is starting to get frustrating because it seems like "they're kind of tap dancing around the administration."

"And I think it's time for us to start exercising this right," he said.

Mendiola said when the conferees met, they all voted in favor of that budget to include language that spells out the utility costs. "It seems like everybody's trying to backpedal off this agreement. It's kind of frustrating," said Mendiola.

Sen. Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) said that whenever they do pass a budget appropriation, they explore the possibility or option of having the Executive Branch or the central government take care of utilities. That is simply because the funding is controlled by the Finance secretary, Hofschneider said,

"But at the end of the day, we need to circle back and say that we need to bless this provision and that we should move forward and find an amicable way to address this thing moving forward," he added.

Sen. Karl Rosario King-Nabors (R-Tinian), who moved for the override, said there was an agreement with the Senate and House conferees because of the addition of a non-existent $9.1 million that was a tax rider was unconstitutional.

"That's why we had to dip into GHLI and Medicaid to begin with. Whose fault was that? Was that Tinian? Was that Senate?" said King-Nabors asked.

AMOUNT

From page 1

and pull out of the Commonwealth.

Some of those key retailers, Quichocho said, include Caronel and certain brands at DFS Galleria.

"And these are alarm bells for us because that's critical infrastructure that we use to attract tourism," said Quichocho during a joint meeting among HANMI, Saipan Chamber of Commerce, and some members of the House of Representatives, in the House chamber on Monday.

He said DFS Galleria has several good products, but when the brands are seeing that shoppers are not coming back, they may not either.

"So it's scary. It really is scary—the amount of infrastructure we're losing rapidly," he said.

As such, they are hoping that the CNMI can turn the tourism industry around and get the tourists back.

"If we do turn it around too late, we may end up being a backpack destination," said Quichocho as he underscored the need for the CNMI to work together on restarting tourism.

This situation, Quichocho said, means the tourism industry is in trouble. "We need to go after every market there is. But we really need help," he said.

Quichocho said he is not sure how long some of the HANMI and Chamber members can hang on, with "losses month over month over month."

"So very serious situation," Quichocho said.

Saipan Chamber of Commerce board of directors president Joseph Guerrero echoed Quichocho, saying the CNMI's situation is dire and very concerning.

Guerrero said he believes it is their civic duty to share whatever information they have with the Legislature and government on what the situation is. He is hoping that the meeting is a chance not just for the Chamber and HANMI to explain the situation but really talk about solutions.

Just like big businesses, small businesses like his are hurting, Guerrero said.

"People may say, 'Hey Joe, Naked Fish is always busy.' But I'm down 25%," said Guerrero, adding that he really does not know how long he can last or hold on at a 25% reduction in sales.

He said a lot of small businesses are calling him, texting him, asking for advice, but that he does not have the answers other than the need to find a way to make things work.

Emergency water service interruption for Kagman II

CUC

The map of Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s emergency water service interruption scheduled from yesterday and today in Kagman II.

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform the general public that there is an emergency water service interruption for customers in Kagman II from 2pm yesterday, Nov. 28, 2023, to 6pm today, Nov. 29, 2023.

The specific affected area Kagman II's Abas Drive and the purpose of the emergency water service interruption is to allow CUC water operators to repair an 8-inch mainline break.

CUC appreciates the public's cooperation and understanding as CUC continues to provide reliable service to customers.

CUC continues to work diligently to minimize any inconvenience to its customers. For more information, contact the CUC Hotline (236-4333) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/). ***(CUC)***

FORMER

From page 1

The Beijing Municipal First Intermediate People's Court ruled on 24 November that Ji was involved in the crimes of picking quarrels and provoking trouble, unlawful intrusion into a home, illegal debt, transporting others across the border and establishing a casino.

It is believed the charges relate both to his time as an executive of Macau junket Hengsheng Group and as project director for Imperial Pacific International, which ran Imperial Palace Saipan before it was shuttered due to the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020. Ji's mother, Cui Lijie, is IPI's majority shareholder.

Ji was deemed to be the head of a criminal syndicate while the court sentenced 15 other people, including his aunt Cui Limei, who was sentenced to eight-and-a half years in prison and fined RMB200,000 (US28,170). The case specifically related to JI Xiaobo will be tried separately.

According to courtroom documents, the criminal syndicate was operated by Ji between 2008 and 2021 where it sought to make illegal profits by setting up casinos outside China; organizing people to use violence, threats and other means to demand the repayment of gambling debts; and organizing people to convert the debts accrued as a result of gambling and transfer the assets.

It is believed Ji has gone into hiding ever since the arrests of fellow junket operators, Suncity's Alvin Chau and Tak Chun's Levo Chan, in recent years. Hengsheng Group also closed after Ji's disappearance.

IPI was founded after Ji's mother, Cui Lijie acquired 74.99% of the issued shares of First Natural Foods Holdings, which was renamed Imperial Pacific International Holdings in May 2014. The company then successfully bid for the only gambling license on Saipan, opening temporary casino Best Sunshine the following year.

Imperial Palace Saipan soft opened in 2017 but was closed in March 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and later had its casino license suspended for failure to pay various license fees.

The local Commonwealth Casino Commission is currently seeking to revoke IPI's casino license permanently.

Reprinted with permission from https://www.asgam.com/index.php/2023/11/27/former-imperial-pacific-and-hengsheng-group-junket-executive-deemed-head-of-criminal-syndicate-by-mainland-china-court/

IPI

From page 1

meeting for tomorrow, Thursday, at 10:30am. Included in the meeting's agenda is an update on the criminal charges and sentencing of IPI affiliates and owners by the Beijing Municipal First Intermediate People's Court's ruling.

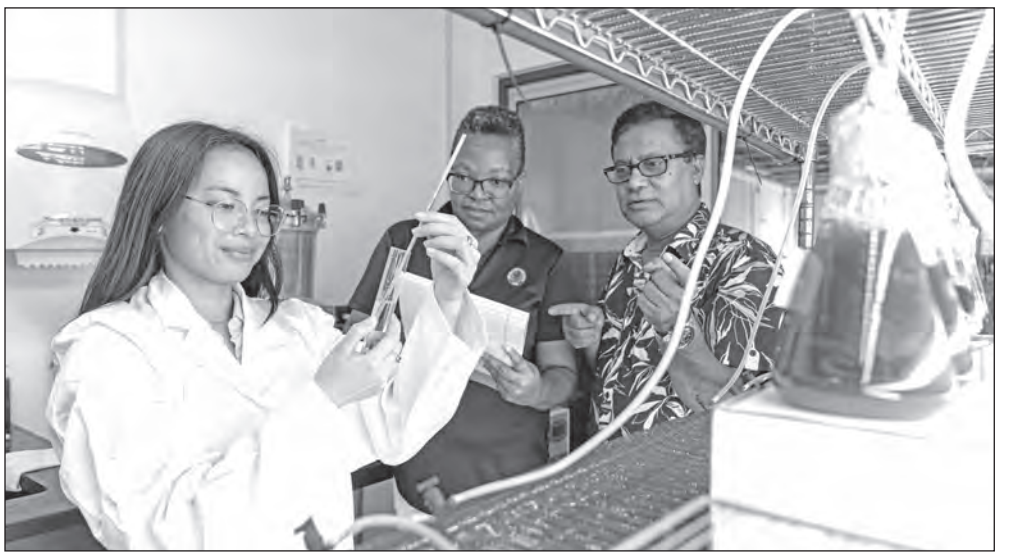
TO EMPOWER FUTURE LEADERS IN AGRICULTURE AND SCIENCE

NMC launches NextGen Scholarship Program

Residents of the Commonwealth looking to pursue higher educational opportunities in the fields of food, agriculture, natural resources, and human sciences may be able to do so at little to no cost as part of the newest scholarship program hosted by Northern Marianas College's Cooperative Research, Extension, and Education Services.

The NextGen Scholarship Program, funded by the U.S. Department of Agriculture–Natural Institute of Food and Agriculture NextGen Workforce Initiative, is specifically tailored to focus on creating a regenerative workforce for African-American and insular communities. This initiative provides a unique opportunity for learners pursuing degrees in food science, agriculture, natural resource management, agritourism, and related disciplines.

Key features of the scholarship include financial and counseling support for eligible undergraduate and graduate degree programs, renewable scholarships for up to four years for bachelor's, three years for master's, and four years for doctorate degrees, with the potential for full or partial funding.



NMC

A student engages in hands-on learning during a laboratory testing session, guided by NextGen Project director and professor/State Program and Food Science leader Dr. Zaidul Sarker and NextGen Program manager Karim Johnson at the Northern Marianas College-Cooperative Research, Extension, and Education Services Center for Aquaculture Development.

The program is open to current NMC students and the CNMI community, as long as the individual resides in the CNMI and is U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident. A minimum grade point average of 2.5 on a 4.0 scale is required to apply, with a 3.0 GPA necessary for renewal. Additionally, applicants must commit to returning to the CNMI after graduation for a specified period.

NextGen Program manager Karim Johnson said that the initiative emphasizes the importance of human support, both locally and nationally, to ensure the success of scholarship recipients.

"This is a unique opportunity to skill up and regenerate the CNMI workforce in a set of industries currently recognized as vital to the well-being of CNMI, now and in the future," Johnson said. Beyond financial resources, the program offers dedicated NextGen counseling support throughout the scholarship award period and provides access to summer academies, internships, and mentorship opportunities through USDA and Minorities in Agriculture Natural Resources and Related Sciences.

To apply, interested candidates are required to complete the NextGen Scholarship Application (https://forms.gle/6JpJuDZPkzX3qKLVA) and submit all supporting documents. The application process includes a thorough review by both internal and external review boards, with highly qualified applicants proceeding to interviews. Final decisions will be communicated to all candidates.

"This is a tremendous opportunity. We look forward to a large pool of well qualified applicants who are committed to enhancing our islands," said Patricia Coleman, NMC-CREES interim dean.

The NextGen Scholarship Program signifies a crucial step towards nurturing the next generation of leaders in industries integral to the well-being and sustainable development of the CNMI. Aspiring students are encouraged to seize this unique opportunity and contribute to the future growth and prosperity of the CNMI.

For more information, please contact karim.johnson@marianas.edu, (670) 237-6851. ***(NMC)***

SAVE THE DATE

Chamber sets December general membership meeting

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce will be holding its December general membership meeting on Dec. 6, Wednesday, from 11:30am to 1pm at the Hibiscus Hall of the Crowne Plaza Resort Saipan.

This meeting will feature updates from various Chamber committees and presentations by notable speakers. Former lawmaker Tina Sablan will share insights on "Our Clean Energy Future" and Chris Concepcion will present the Marianas Visitors Authority's tourism industry updates.

The registration fee is $25 for Chamber members and $35 for future-Chamber members. To confirm attendance, interested participants are encouraged to RSVP by visiting the following link: https://business.saipanchamber.com/events/details/2023-december-general-membership-meeting-377?calendarMonth=2023-12-01

In the spirit of the holiday season, the Chamber extends a heartfelt invitation to both members and future members to join in spreading joy and invites all attendees to make a positive impact by donating a toy to the 2023 Toys for Tots campaign. Donating a toy will not only brighten the holiday season for those in need but also foster a sense of community and togetherness.

For more information about the meeting or to inquire about the 2023 Toys for Tots campaign, contact the Chamber office at (670) 234-7150 or email contactus@saipanchamber.org.

Join us in making a difference and creating a festive atmosphere at the Saipan Chamber of Commerce's December GMM! ***(PR)***

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF SELVINO ATALIG TAISACAN, Decedent.	Civil Action No. 00-0180D; Civil Action No. 00-0179D (Consolidated Probate Cases) **NOTICE OF HEARING**
IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF PATROCINA E. TAISACAN, Decedent.	

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that Administrator Richard E. Taisacan's Petition for Final Distribution will be heard before the Honorable Joseph N. Camacho, Associate Judge, on the 14th day of December, 2023, at 10:00 a.m., at the Superior Court for the Northern Mariana Islands, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All persons interested are hereby notified to appear at the hearing and show cause, if any, why the petition should not be granted.

For further particulars, please refer to the Petition on file herein, or contact counsel for Petitioner, Joey P. San Nicolas, P.O. Box 10,001 PMB 602, Saipan, MP 96950; telephone (670) 234-7659 and email jpsn@sannicolaslaw.net.

Dated this day 24th of November, 2023.

Hon. JOSEPH N. CAMACHO
Associate Judge

CHARITY R. HODSON (F0487)
ATTORNEY AT LAW
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Attorney for Co-Petitioners Amanda H. Barlag and Semerina Simram

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

THE ESTATE OF JOHN CHARLES HARDY, SR. **Deceased,**	**CIVIL ACTION NO. 23-0227** **NOTICE OF HEARING AND NOTICE TO CREDITORS** **Date: December 14, 2023 Time: 10:00 a.m. Judge: Hon. Joseph N. Camacho**

TO: THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ANY HEIRS, CLAIMANTS, OR CREDITORS OF THE LATE JOHN CHARLES HARDY, SR. OR HIS ESTATE:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that **Amanda H. Barlag and Semerina Simram** have petitioned the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands to issue Letters Testamentary for the Estate of John Charles Hardy, Sr., the deceased. The hearing on the Petition is scheduled to be heard on the date and at the time set forth above at the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All interested persons or entities should appear at this hearing. Any and all persons, creditors, or entities having claims against the deceased or his Estate are hereby required by law to file their claims with the Clerk of Court within sixty (60) days of this publication or the claim(s) will be baited. A copy of your claim should also be sent to the attorney for Petitioners, CHARITY R. HODSON, Attorney at Law, whose address is Plata Drive, Chalan Kiya, P.O. Box 502607, Saipan, MP 96950.

Dated this 17th day of November, 2023.

/s/
Clerk of Court/Deputy Clerk of Court

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

INVITATION FOR BIDS
CUC-IFB-24-003

Carolina Heights Waterline Replacement

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Carolina Heights Waterline Replacement in Tinian, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists of the installation of a waterline main, service laterals, connection to the existing waterline main, and the installation of fire hydrants.

The project is funded by a grant from the US Department of Interior/Office of Insular Affairs (US DOI/OIA) and CUC. The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from US DOI/OIA.

CUC requires the project to be completed in **210 calendar days** from the date of award of the contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The IFB package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of $200.00 for one IFB package set.

A Pre-Bid Conference will be held on **December 12, 2023 at 10:00 AM (ChST)** at the CUC Main Conference Room, 3rd Floor, Room No. 17, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid MUST be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "**CUC-IFB-24-003, Carolina Heights Waterline Replacement**" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 27, 2023,** at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before the due date and time or post-marked before the due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of *fifteen percent (15%)* of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety.

A *Payment Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent and a *Performance Bond* of one hundred (100%) percent of the total bid price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. The Payment and Performance bond must be executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification shall be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). *Bidders are required to submit clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.*

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.
This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 14, 2023** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC Procurement & Supply Purchasing Admnistrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org, with a copy to Larry Manacop, Acting Chief Engineer via email at larry.manacop@cucgov.org, Joel Puyat, Engineer via email at joel.puyat@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Senior Administrative Technician via email address at christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

BETTINA G. TERLAJE
Acting Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

CUC releases schedule of power interruptions for December

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. would like to inform the general public that there will be scheduled power service interruptions during the month of December 2023, as CUC continues its ongoing system maintenance. See additional information below:

CUC

A map of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s scheduled power service interruption in Koblerville on Dec. 1.

CUC

A map of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.'s scheduled power service interruption in Tanapag on Dec. 5.

Friday, Dec. 1, 2023

■ Power Service Interruption Time: 9am to 1pm

■ Area(s) Affected: Koblerville (Alaguan St.)

■ Water Well(s) Affected: None

■ Wastewater Facility Affected: None

■ Traffic Light(s) Affected: None

■ Purpose: For the CUC linemen to replace a rotted power pole with a concrete pole.

Saturday, Dec. 2, 2023

Power Service Interruption Time: 6am to 1pm

■ Area(s) Affected: Susupe (from the Arizona Building south to the Mt. Carmel Cathedral traffic light)

■ Water Well(s) Affected: None

■ Wastewater Facility Affected: A5

■ Traffic Light(s) Affected: Susupe (near Mt. Carmel Cathedral)

Momentary Power Service Interruption Time: 6am to 6:30am and 12:30pm to 1pm

■ Area(s) Affected: Susupe (from Sun Palace area south to the Arizona Building)

■ Water Well(s) Affected: None

■ Wastewater Facility Affected: A5

■ Traffic Light(s) Affected: Marianas High School and Joeten Susupe

Purpose: For the CUC linemen to relocate two concrete power poles under the DPW Route 33 project.

Tuesday, Dec. 5, 2023

■ Power Service Interruption Time: 9am to 2pm.

■ Area(s) Affected: Tanapag

■ Water Well(s) Affected: None

■ Wastewater Facility Affected: None

■ Traffic Light(s) Affected: None

■ Purpose: For the CUC linemen to replace two wooden power poles with concrete poles.

Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2023

Power Service Interruption Time: 8:30am to 2:30pm

■ Area(s) Affected: Portions of Chalan Tun Kiyoshi Rd. and Pontan Dr.

■ Water Well(s) Affected: KV9, KV11, KV12, KV13, KV16, KV17, KV111, KV116

■ Wastewater Facility Affected: None

■ Traffic Light(s) Affected: None

Momentary Power Service Interruption Time: 8:30am to 9am and 2pm to 2:30pm

■ Area(s) Affected: Chalan Tun Kiyoshi Rd. and Pontan Dr.

■ Water Well(s) Affected: KV9, KV11, KV12, KV13, KV16, KV17, KV111, KV116

■ Wastewater Facility Affected: None

■ Traffic Light(s) Affected: None

Purpose: For the CUC linemen to replace three existing 55-foot concrete poles with 45-foot concrete poles.

Thursday, Dec. 7, 2023

Power Service Interruption Time: 8:30am to 3:30pm

■ Area(s) Affected: Smiling Cove Marina (Marine Enforcement Facility

■ Water Well(s) Affected: None

■ Wastewater Facility Affected: None

■ Traffic Light(s) Affected: None

Momentary Power Service Interruption Time: 8:30am to 9am and 3pm to 3:30pm

■ Area(s) Affected: Smiling Cove Marina (Marine Enforcement Facility), Industrial Dr. (Shell Marianas, Winners Gas, Mobil Oil Marianas, Division of Customs, Saipan Shipping Company, Inc., Saipan Stevedore, Commonwealth Ports Authority, and portions of the U.S. Army Reserve facilities), and Lower Base (Sea Plane Ramp Pl.) (see attached map with red and yellow highlights).

■ Water Well(s) Affected: None

■ Wastewater Facility Affected: S1 and S3

■ Traffic Light(s) Affected: None

Purpose: For the CUC linemen to replace five 45-foot wooden power poles with concrete poles.

Saturday, Dec. 9, 2023

■ Power Service Interruption Time: 6am to 2pm

■ Area(s) Affected: El Torro Dandan, Kannat Tabla, Airport Road San Vicente, Dandan, Baptist School, Dandan Middle School, Northern Marianas College, Isley Field, Obyan, CPA/Airport, As Lito, Chalan Msgr. Martinez Road, Saipan International School, Tottotville, Chalan Joaquin Doi Rd, St. Jude Church, and portions of Chalan Kanoa

■ Water Well(s) Affected: Obyan Well Field, Isley Well Field, Kobler Well Field, and As Water services to the following Tank Service Areas (TSAs) may be affected by tank water levels: As Terlaje TSA, Kannat Tabla TSA, San Vicente TSA, Dandan TSA, and Isley TSA Lito Well Field

■ Wastewater Facility Affected: A8, A10, A12, A13, A14, A15, W8, W10

■ Traffic Light(s) Affected: As Terlaje, Dandan (near Shell), San Vicente (near Iglecia ni Cristo), and As Lito/As Perdido Intersection

■ Purpose: For the CUC linemen to replace one 45-foot wooden power pole with a concrete pole and to replace two 50-foot wooden power pole with 55-foot concrete poles.

Tuesday, Dec. 12, 2023

Power Service Interruption Time: 8:30am to 3:30pm

■ Area(s) Affected: Smiling Cove Marina (Marine Enforcement Facility)

■ Water Well(s) Affected: None

■ Wastewater Facility Affected: None

■ Traffic Light(s) Affected: None

Momentary Power Service Interruption Time: 8:30am to 9am and 3pm to 3:30pm

■ Area(s) Affected: Lower Base (the CUC Power Plant No. 1 and DFW), Puerto Rico (CPA Seaport, Saipan Shipping Co., Division of Customs, Mobil Oil Marianas, Shell Marianas, and portions of the U.S. Army Reserve facilities), and Smiling Cove Marina (Marine Enforcement Facility) (see attached map with yellow and red lines)

■ Water Well(s) Affected: None

■ Wastewater Facility Affected: S1 and S3

■ Traffic Light(s) Affected: None

Purpose: For the CUC linemen to replace five 45-foot wooden power poles with concrete poles.

Thursday, Dec. 14, 2023

Power Service Interruption Time: 8:30am to 2:30pm

■ Area(s) Affected: Lower Base (the CUC Power Plant No. 1 and DFW)

■ Water Well(s) Affected: None

■ Wastewater Facility Affected: None

■ Traffic Light(s) Affected: None

Momentary Power Service Interruption Time: 8:30am to 9am and 2pm to 2:30pm

■ Area(s) Affected: Lower Base (the CUC Power Plant No. 1 and DFW), CUC Lab and Water Division, Puerto Rico, Sadog Tasi Treatment Plant,

Lower Navy Hill

■ Water Well(s) Affected: PR164

■ Wastewater Facility Affected: S1, S3, and Sadog Tasi Treatment Plant

■ Traffic Light(s) Affected: Puerto Rico and Lower Navy Hill

Purpose: For the CUC linemen to replace four wooden power poles with concrete poles.

Tuesday, Dec. 19, 2023

Power Service Interruption Time: 8:30am to 3:30pm

■ Area(s) Affected: CUC Lab and Water Division, Puerto Rico, and Sadog Tasi Treatment Plant

■ Water Well(s) Affected: PR164

■ Wastewater Facility Affected: Sadog Tasi Treatment Plant

■ Traffic Light(s) Affected: None

Momentary Power Service Interruption Time: 8:30am to 9am and 3pm to 3:30pm

■ Area(s) Affected: Lower Base (the CUC Power Plant No. 1 and DFW), CUC Lab and Water Division, Puerto Rico, Sadog Tasi Treatment Plant, and Lower Navy Hill (see attached map with red and yellow circles)

■ Water Well(s) Affected: PR164

■ Wastewater Facility Affected: S1, S3, and Sadog Tasi Treatment Plant

■ Traffic Light(s) Affected: Puerto Rico and Lower Navy Hill

Purpose: For the CUC linemen to replace one 40-foot and five 45-foot wooden power poles with concrete poles.

Thursday, Dec. 21, 2023

Power Service Interruption Time: 8:30am to 3:30pm

■ Area(s) Affected: CUC Lab and Water Division, Puerto Rico, and Sadog Tasi Treatment Plant

■ Water Well(s) Affected: PR164

■ Wastewater Facility Affected: Sadog Tasi Treatment Plant

■ Traffic Light(s) Affected: None

Momentary Power Service Interruption Time: 8:30am to 9am and 3pm to 3:30pm

■ Area(s) Affected: Lower Base (the CUC Power Plant No. 1 and DFW), CUC Lab and Water Division, Puerto Rico, Sadog Tasi Treatment Plant, and Lower Navy Hill (see attached map with red and yellow circles)

■ Water Well(s) Affected: PR164

■ Wastewater Facility Affected: S1, S3, and Sadog Tasi Treatment Plant

■ Traffic Light(s) Affected: Puerto Rico and Lower Navy Hill

Purpose: For the CUC linemen to replace five 45-foot wooden power poles with concrete poles.

Wednesday, Dec. 27, 2023

Power Service Interruption Time: 8:30am to 3:30pm

■ Area(s) Affected: CUC Lab and Water Division, Puerto Rico, and Sadog Tasi Treatment Plant

■ Water Well(s) Affected: PR164

■ Wastewater Facility Affected: Sadog Tasi Treatment Plant

■ Traffic Light(s) Affected: None

Momentary Power Service Interruption Time: 8:30am to 9am and 3pm to 3:30pm

■ Area(s) Affected: Lower Base (the CUC Power Plant No. 1 and DFW), CUC Lab and Water Division, Puerto Rico, Sadog Tasi Treatment Plant, and Lower Navy Hill

■ Water Well(s) Affected: PR164

■ Wastewater Facility Affected: S1, S3, and Sadog Tasi Treatment Plant

■ Traffic Light(s) Affected: Puerto Rico and Lower Navy Hill

Purpose: For the CUC linemen to replace five 45-foot wooden power poles with concrete poles.

Friday, Dec. 29, 2023

Power Service Interruption Time: 8:30am to 3:30pm

■ Area(s) Affected: CUC Lab and Water Division, Puerto Rico, and Sadog Tasi Treatment Plant

■ Water Well(s) Affected: PR164

■ Wastewater Facility Affected: Sadog Tasi Treatment Plant

■ Traffic Light(s) Affected: None

Momentary Power Service Interruption Time: 8:30am to 9am and 3pm to 3:30pm

■ Area(s) Affected: Lower Base (the CUC Power Plant No. 1 and DFW), CUC Lab and Water Division, Puerto Rico, Sadog Tasi Treatment Plant, and Lower Navy Hill

■ Water Well(s) Affected: PR164

■ Wastewater Facility Affected: S1, S3, and Sadog Tasi Treatment Plant

■ Traffic Light(s) Affected: Puerto Rico and Lower Navy Hill

Purpose: For the CUC linemen to replace five 45 feet wooden power poles with concrete poles.

CUC appreciates the public's understanding and patience during these power service interruptions.

CUC continues to work diligently to minimize any inconvenience to its customers. For more information, contact the CUC Customer Hotline (236-4333) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/). ***(CUC)***

DURING RECENT JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING

USCG enhances partnership, security commitments with Palau

USCG

Faculty, students, and U.S. Coast Guard members take a moment for a photo at Palau Community College in Koror, Palau, in November 2023. In an enduring commitment to regional stability and cooperative security, U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam personnel participated in a bilateral Joint Committee Meeting with the Republic of Palau, alongside U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and the U.S. Department of State representatives in Palau from Nov. 14-17, 2023.

USCG

Lt. Anna Vaccaro sets up a table for a U.S. Coast Guard Academy recruiting event at the Palau Community College in Koror, Palau, in November 2023.

By CHIEF WARRANT OFFICER SARA MUIR
U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/ Sector Guam

SANTA RITA, Guam—In an enduring commitment to regional stability and cooperative security, U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/ Sector Guam personnel participated in a bilateral Joint Committee Meeting with the Republic of Palau, alongside U.S. Indo-Pacific Command and the U.S. Department of State representatives in Palau from Nov. 14 to17, 2023.

The JCM, spearheaded by Rear Adm. Gregory Huffman and Palau President Surangel Whipps Jr., with support from U.S. Ambassador to Palau Joel Ehrendreich, underscored the significance of the Compact of Free Association in fostering mutual defense and security strategies.

The U.S. Coast Guard's active role in this engagement included delivering key presentations on past achievements and charting the course for future initiatives. Notable accomplishments featured engagement with Palau Community College students, educating them about opportunities at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, and the contribution of supplies for navigation safety, presented to Gov. Sharp Sakuma of Ngaraard State.

"Through our steadfast collaboration with the Republic of Palau, we are not only enhancing our mutual maritime security but also nurturing a partnership that respects our shared values and responsibilities," said Capt. Nick Simmons, commander, U.S. Coast Guard Forces Micronesia/Sector Guam. "Our participation in the Joint Committee Meeting, regular visits, and around 45 patrol days spent in the Palau exclusive economic zone in Fiscal Year 2023 reflect our unwavering commitment to regional stability and the prosperity of our Pacific partners."

Looking forward, the U.S. Coast Guard will further solidify its support to Palau through the Palau Search and Rescue Exercise in early 2024, the deployment of the Microbe-acon Barge to Oceania, and the continuation of shiprider operations under the enhanced bilateral agreement.

UNCLASSIFIED
MAY-NOVEMBER 2023
MARITIME DOMAIN AWARENESS
- Increased patrols with REMELIIK II & KEDAM in Drydock
- Shiprider Opportunities
- FY23: 45 Days on Patrol, Completed 2 Observation Reports, 9 Boardings

USCG

Lt. Cmdr. Christine Igisomar and Lt. Anna Vaccaro present for the U.S. Coast Guard at the Joint Committee Meeting in Koror, Palau, in November 2023.

The recent success of the USCGC *Frederick Hatch* (WPC 1143) in Palau's exclusive economic zone exemplifies the strengthened partnership and mutual dedication to maritime governance.

The crew conducted crucial surveillance, compiling eight observation reports highlighting potential maritime governance threats, including identifying six Philippine-flagged fishing vessels operating without valid permits near Palau's EEZ. These observations signaled serious violations of WCPFC regulations.

A follow-up patrol leg in the Palau EEZ revealed a positive shift, with reduced unauthorized fishing activities. Additionally, in response to a request from the Palau Joint Operations Center, the crew disposed of two fish aggregating devices, directly addressing illegal fishing concerns. This patrol exemplifies the U.S. Coast Guard's commitment to enforcing international fishery laws and strengthening its partnership with Palau, thereby enhancing regional maritime stability and resource sustainability.

The JCM concluded with a shared vision of enhanced security cooperation and a unified approach to defense responsibilities, with both nations reaffirming their commitment to peace and stability in the region. ***(USCG)***

Pacific Island auditors trained on revised government auditing standards

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—The Pacific Association of Supreme Audit Institutions has partnered with the Graduate School USA to train government audit office staff in congressional-style jurisdictions to conduct performance audits to new standards from today.

Sixty-one staff (30 female, 31 male) from the government audit offices of American Samoa, the Federated States of Micronesia, FSM Chuuk, FSM Kosrae, FSM Pohnpei, FSM Yap, Guam, the Marshall Islands, the Northern Mariana Islands, and Palau are participating in the two part-day, online workshop from Nov. 28 to 29, 2023.

These jurisdictions, concentrated in the North Pacific, are either American territories or are in 'free association' with the United States of America. As such, the government auditing standards they follow are American.

The course will cover the general standards for governmental auditing, such as ethical principles and quality control. It also includes the fieldwork and reporting standards for performance audits.

After an in-depth review of and update on the standards, participants will discuss the purpose and requirements of individual standards, with an emphasis on the recent changes.

PASAI director (North), Doris Flores Brooks, was delighted by the response of PASAI members to the opportunity to learn about the revisions to the standards.

"We are pleased to be meeting the demand for training that is tailored to the needs of government auditors working in Congressional systems," she said.

PASAI is sponsoring the course being offered by the Graduate School USA through its Pacific Island and Virgin Island Training Initiatives programme. Its Oregon-based instructor, Drummond Kahn, has trained Pacific Island auditors over many years.

PASAI acknowledges the support of the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. ***(PR)***

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Red states, blue states—a tale of migration

U.S. migration patterns speak volumes about progressive governance. Will Nevada Democrats heed the message?

The Tax Foundation this month released a study of IRS and Census data from 2019 through 2021 delving into the relocation habits of Americans. The clear conclusion: "That people and businesses favor states with low and structurally sound tax systems, which can impact the state's economic growth and governmental coffers," the report found.

The trend is true across income levels, but it is most pronounced among those with $200,000 or more in adjusted gross earnings. The most popular inbound states for high earners were Florida, Texas, North Carolina, Arizona and South Carolina. The biggest losers were California, New York, Illinois, Massachusetts and New Jersey.

Notice the pattern? The contrast between high-tax (blue) and low-tax states (red) could not be more clear.

"While taxes are just one factor influencing the location decisions of individuals and businesses, they are an important factor—and one within policymakers' control," the Tax Foundation notes. "States that prioritize structurally sound tax policy improvements will reap the economic benefits that come with creating an attractive fiscal landscape in which all individuals and businesses have the opportunity to thrive."

Nevada is somewhat of an anomaly. The state has trended blue in recent elections, but it has no state income tax and was among the states with the highest net gains in taxpayer adjusted gross income. No doubt its proximity to California makes it attractive for those looking to escape the Golden State's oppressive tax and regulatory regime.

The ramifications of migration should concern policymakers, the Tax Foundation argues, because of "the effect of interstate migration on tax revenue, economic output and economic growth over time." Indeed, in a similar analysis by the National Taxpayer Foundation, Nevada ranked second behind Florida in increasing its tax base due to new arrivals.

How long this will continue is up to state voters. Gov. Joe Lombardo, a Republican, has pledged to hold the line on tax hikes, but his veto pen may soon turn to dust. Legislative Democrats currently have a veto-proof majority in the Assembly and are one seat shy of the same in the Senate. If the state GOP continues its recent record of electoral futility next November, it's possible that there will be few checks on the progressive instincts of the majority leadership during the 2025 legislative session.

That is something for Nevada voters to consider as they ponder their choices next year.

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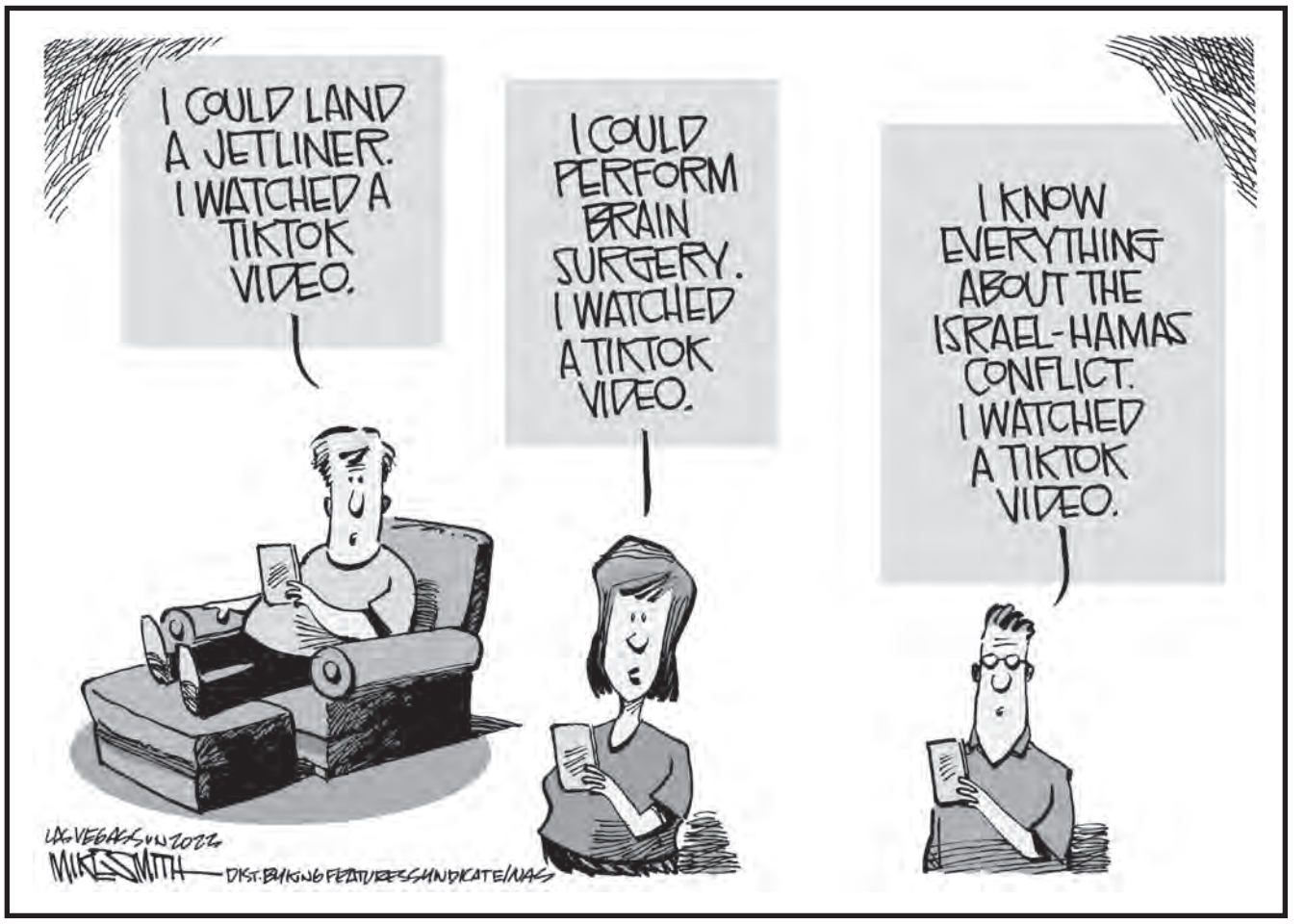

I COULD LAND A JETLINER. I WATCHED A TIKTOK VIDEO.
I COULD PERFORM BRAIN SURGERY. I WATCHED A TIKTOK VIDEO.
I KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT THE ISRAEL-HAMAS CONFLICT. I WATCHED A TIKTOK VIDEO.
LAS VEGAS SUN 2023
MIKE SMITH
DIST. BY KING FEATURES SYNDICATE/NAS

Today's backlash against Jewish people is steeped in a long history of hatred

By RON GROSSMAN
Chicago Tribune

Ron Grossman is a Tribune reporter.

At the first reports of a massacre of Israeli civilians, I shuddered, fearing the worst was yet to come. Sadly, I was right. Before sundown on Oct. 7, Israel was being blamed for Hamas' killings, mutilations and kidnappings of Israeli civilians.

As a historian, I know only too well the common denominator of thousands of years of my people's experience: Jews are blamed for whatever calamity humanity suffers. That is true even when Jews are the victims.

Eighty-five years ago, Nazi mobs and ordinary citizens sacked Jewish stores in a frenzy that became known as Kristallnacht, the "night of broken glass." It foretold the gas chambers of the Holocaust. The morning after Kristallnacht, Germany's streets were swept clean of the glass and debris, and the Jews had to reimburse the government for the cost of the cleanup. The animus stretches back further. During the Black Death in the 14th century, Jews were said to have caused the plague by poisoning wells. Adolf Hitler stirred up long-standing prejudice by preaching that Germany lost World War I because Jews sold out their country.

Currently, pundits and talking heads are saying that Israel is out to destroy the Palestinians' hope for a state of their own. But history is more complex than the story that comes out of a megaphone.

On the day of Israel's birth in 1948, an Arab neighbor made absolutely clear its intention to destroy the Jewish state. All across the Middle East and North Africa, Arabs wildly celebrated the prospect. An Egyptian army set out on a coastal road leading to Tel Aviv, Israel's capital. Its commander radioed Cairo that he'd soon be there. He'd put an end to this Jewish trespasser on the domain of Islam. But just north of a city named Gaza, the Egyptians were stopped by residents of a kibbutz.

Their handful of small arms were left at the trench they defended—so future generations would know where Israel won the right to life.

Some mornings, I read newspapers hoping to see the term "Gaza strip" explained. It is an unusual name for a battlefield. Yet its story isn't forthcoming. What I do see is self-righteous posturing that triggers my memories of painful chapters in Jewish history.

When French President Emmanuel Macron insists that Israel stop killing women and children, my mind's eye sees the Jews expelled from France in 1182. A contemporary chronicler explained that King Philip II heard: "The Jews who dwelled in Paris were wont every year on Easter Day, or during the sacred week of the Lord's passion, to go secretly down to underground vaults and kill a Christian."

When peaceful counterprotesters were arrested at an anti-Israel march in London, I recalled King Edward I's 1290 banishment of England's Jews.

Let's be clear about today's antisemitism. It imposes a heavier burden on my children than I experienced in my youth. My walk to grade school passed a two-flat. During Israel's War of Independence, gentile boys would gather there to sing, in faux Jewish accents:

Sons of Hymn and Abbie
Join the Jewish Navy
Fight, fight, fight for Palestine.

But I could say to myself: "I'll be leaving these louts behind. I'm going to college."

Today, college can become a stage for antisemitism.

A granddaughter of mine is a student at the University of Maryland. Despite its significant Jewish enrollment—or, perhaps, because of it—an enormous image projected on a building there advertised: "HOLOCAUST 2.0." To her, the Holocaust is more than an abstract concept. She knows that she is alive because I'm alive, and I'm alive because my maternal great-grandmother sent my grandfather from Poland to Chicago. She somehow sensed the Holocaust was coming. She did the same with the rest of her children, all when they were scarcely teenagers. She was murdered in the Treblinka extermination camp. There wasn't an Israel where she could find refuge.

My share of her descendants are social activists. One carried a picket sign while holding a baby. Another chose to teach in Oakland's public schools because children born into poverty need a young, enthusiastic teacher, she felt.

Now my children are vilified as "colonialists" by some they marched with, for not becoming anti-Israel. My own mind is a virtual split screen. On one, I see the bloodshed in Gaza.

On the other, there's a ghostly procession: I see myself heckled by Jew-hating teenagers, and I see a handful of kibbutzniks keeping Israel from being stillborn. I see my ancestors exiled from England, France and Spain. I see the king of France and others saying that it had to done because Jews thirst for Christian blood. I hear my grandfather sobbing at the news of his mother's murder in Treblinka.

And I see her, my great-grandmother, Miriam Komenovich. Without her wisdom, I wouldn't be here writing this story.

EDITORIAL POLICY Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

We're raising a generation of prudes. That's not a bad thing

By AMANDA LITTLE
Bloomberg Opinion

Amanda Little is a Bloomberg Opinion *columnist covering agriculture and climate. She is a professor at Vanderbilt University and author of* The Fate of Food: What We'll Eat in a Bigger, Hotter, Smarter World.

I can't say I didn't smile in the movie "No Hard Feelings" when Jennifer Lawrence storms the bedrooms at a college house party and, finding only teens sitting around texting, lambasts them all for failing to do some good old-fashioned shagging.

The film satirizes the now-common knowledge that Gen Z has become sexually timid—a stereotype supported by data from institutions including UCLA and the University of Chicago showing that sexual activity has markedly declined among young Americans in recent years.

This data makes sense if you consider the combined impact of the pandemic and social media: This is a generation raised behind masks and screens. Young Americans have experienced unprecedented loneliness and physical isolation in their social environments, so it follows that sexual intimacy would seem uniquely inaccessible and uncomfortable to them.

What's more surprising are the findings from a recent UCLA study showing that Gen Z is eschewing not just sexual behavior but also sexual content in film and television. Nearly half of 1,500 viewers surveyed between the ages of 10 and 24 said sex "isn't needed" for the plot of TV shows and movies, and most preferred content about platonic relationships and friendships.

As a parent raising my middle and high school kids with a mindset similar to the one I was raised with—that sexual desire is healthy and acting upon it can be safe and fun—the prudishness trend concerned me at first. But the psychologists I've interviewed have convinced me that a craving for PG-rated content is not just reasonable but also a healthy adaptation for Gen Z.

This is a generation, after all, that has received much of its sex education from often-jarring online pornography. Younger people have also been exposed early on to the risks of sexual behavior via the #MeToo and the sexual consent movements and from watching the undoing of Roe v. Wade. Gen Z has also been assiduously rethinking the many complex shades of its sexual and gender identities while challenging the structure and purpose of societal institutions, including marriage.

Given these pressures and influences, "of course Gen Z is longing for trust, safety, intimacy and connection," Alexandra Solomon, a sex and relationship therapist who teaches in the School of Education and Social Policy at Northwestern University, told me.

Some young Americans even describe their resistance to sex as a career decision. Solomon, who is the author of Love Every Day and offers relationship advice on Instagram, has counseled Gen Zers who avoid sexual relationships because they don't have the time and "emotional bandwidth" and would rather focus their energy on professional growth and financial security. In this context, a desire for entertainment about safe, platonic love makes sense and can eventually become "a foundation for healthy desire and sexual exploration," she added.

So yes, some amount of prudishness or delayed sexual maturity in Gen Z is nothing to be concerned about—and may be in fact an expression of pragmatism and careful discernment. After all, Gen Z is not just moderate about sex but about other potentially risky behaviors: They are drinking, for example, about 20% less alcohol than millennials did at their age, and this "sober curiosity" can certainly be a good thing.

But what can be risky, according to Solomon and other adolescent therapists, is when the emerging subculture of "puriteenism" in Gen Z goes beyond moderation to advocate for stringent rules around sexual abstinence, sobriety, clean diet and other absolutist lifestyle choices. The "wholesome" trend, which first emerged a few years ago, is still going strong with 125+ million views on TikTok, while Wholesome Memes on the platform formerly known as Twitter has 3 million followers.

Choosing an extreme or fixed identity can backfire. We learned from the Puritans themselves that strict asceticism often can't endure. Says Solomon: "When you hear a young person subscribing to a rigid identity or system of behavior, there's cause for concern—especially if that system is governed by fear or shame. Because when curiosity, attraction, and desire inevitably begin to bubble up, their internal response will be to crank up the pressure and lock themselves down," which in turn can feed anxiety and depression in a generation already struggling to protect and restore its mental health.

This kind of moral anxiety makes it hard to maintain a healthy discourse around sex and identity.

The uncomfortable reality for parents of teens is that it's up to us to lead an open conversation with our kids about sexuality, especially at a time when teaching sex education in middle and high schools has become highly controversial. The responsibility also falls on institutes of higher education. Solomon's undergraduate Northwestern curricula, which includes "Marriage 101" and explores topics from asexuality and demisexuality to pansexuality and polyamory, provides an interesting model.

The media plays an important role, too, of course. Hollywood should continue to produce the full gamut of content from more explicit shows like "Euphoria" and "Sex Education" to tamer and gentler storytelling like "No Hard Feelings" and "Heartstopper," allowing Gen Z to continue to draw from and participate in a more nuanced sexual discourse than previous generations. So long as the dialogue is open and evolving, the young people who have wedged themselves into fixed ideas and identities can shift and grow and be welcomed back into the conversation.

An IED made me a double amputee, but that didn't mean I couldn't continue to serve in the Army

By GREGORY GADSON
Los Angeles Times

Retired Col. Gregory Gadson is co-author, with Terese Schlachter, of his biography Finding Waypoints: A Warrior's Journey Towards Peace and Purpose.

Over the last 16 years, I've managed a major military base, run a government contracting business, appeared in two motion pictures and made motivational speeches before hundreds of audiences all over the country, most notably to the New York Giants when they beat the New England Patriots in the 2008 Super Bowl.

Do these sound like the accomplishments of a disabled person?

In 2007 I lost both my legs above the knee in an IED explosion in Iraq. My first job was to recover. But my next task after being wounded was figuring out how to stay in the Army.

I am a 26-year Army veteran. During that time, I served in every major conflict in which the United States was involved, including Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm in Kuwait, Operation Joint Forge in Bosnia-Herzegovina; Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and, as I mentioned, Operation Iraqi Freedom. Still, once I'd mostly recovered from my injuries, I was required to face a medical evaluation to determine whether I was fit to serve.

Obviously, the Army can't be filled with people like me if it's going to maintain a ready force. And the Army just assumed I'd had enough. So Army HR began nudging me toward the exit.

But the Army wasn't paying me to run. They were paying me to lead. And I wanted to continue to serve my country.

So I fought the Army's assumptions. I looked for options and I learned of a path called Continuation On Active Duty. It's a program for soldiers who have been determined unfit by the Army's Physical Disability Evaluation System but may remain on active duty nonetheless. The program's objective is to "conserve manpower by the effective use of needed skills or experience." After completing a mountain of research and paperwork, I was permitted to stay in the Army.

Once I got a COAD exemption, I went on to direct the Army's Wounded Warrior Program, known as AW2. I had about 10,000 wounded soldiers to assist, mostly as they navigated benefits or employment while they transitioned out of the Army. After that I was promoted to colonel, then became the garrison commander at Ft. Belvoir in Virginia, a job that's sort of like being a mayor. I made sure things ran smoothly on the 8,600-acre base, which houses 16 Army agencies and nine Department of Defense agencies, along with U.S. Army Reserve and National Guard units.

I don't mention all of this to make myself sound like some sort of hero. I simply want to demonstrate what can happen when the mainstream reaches into its contributing tributaries. Rather than thinking of disabled people as a drain, we should be thought of as a resource.

More than 8.6 million people with disabilities are part of the American workforce, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. But 1.3 million more are unemployed. The U.S. unemployment rate as of September was 3.5%, compared to 7.8% for those the Department of Labor considers to be disabled.

Here's a better term: differently abled. We find workarounds for things like hearing or vision loss, and cognitive difficulties. Many, like me, use a wheelchair. We may require some sort of accommodation, but we tend to be worth it.

Think about it: Disabled job applicants have overcome something. They've demonstrated resourcefulness and probably quite a bit of creativity. If employers are overlooking differently abled people when they hire, they are most certainly missing out.

Disabled people, I believe, are the most universally discriminated-against group in America.

Overall, we make 66 cents for every dollar earned by our able-bodied colleagues. In some states it's legal to pay people who have a disability less than minimum wage based on the mere assumption that they're less productive. And think of this: If you have a physical or mental disability, it may not impair your ability to do many jobs but it could be exceptionally difficult for you to mow your own lawn, do your own laundry or fix a simple plumbing problem. Taking care of such everyday chores may cost double or quadruple what's required if you could DIY more of these tasks.

There have been some victories. In 1990 the Americans with Disabilities Act was passed, which opened doors for many, but too often, not widely enough. Disabled people are less likely than the able-bodied to work in management or leadership positions. In America we've learned to call out race- and sex-based discrimination, demanding diverse colors and genders in the workforce, but I'd also like to see more people running businesses from their wheelchairs, making deals through accessible communications.

The Army's COAD program provided me with a path forward after my injury. But it also presented hurdles I had to overcome. I believe that one reason only a small percentage of disabled soldiers stay in the Army is because too few know they have the option and even fewer have the support they need to tackle the red tape. The Army, like private industry, needs to be transparent about opportunities for the disabled.

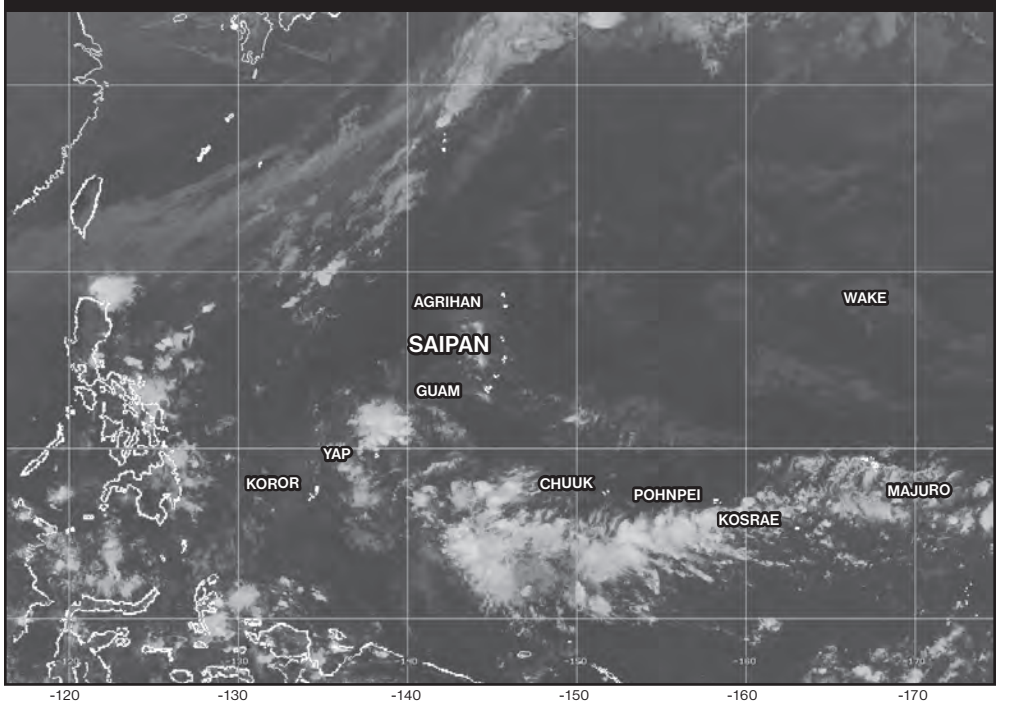
And yes, the differently abled who demand equality in the workplace have a responsibility as well. If the community isn't reaching out, we need to reach in. Let's be sure that people around us know what we can do, rather than letting them make assumptions about what we cannot.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly sunny with scattered showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.	Mostly cloudy with a 30 percent chance of showers and a slight chance of thunderstorms.	Partly cloudy with a 20 percent chance of showers.
86 / 78°	86 / 78°	86 / 79°	86 / 79°	86 / 79°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 8:09 AM, TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 28, 2023

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Satellite and radar imagery show an area of scattered showers over, and to the east of the Marianas this morning. Easterly winds were also over the local area.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: https://www.weather.gov/gum/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	87° / 79°
Palau	Thunderstorms	86° / 77°
Yap	Partly Cloudy	86° / 80°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 80°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 81°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:25 AM	5:44 PM
Thursday	6:26 AM	5:44 PM
Friday	6:26 AM	5:44 PM
Saturday	6:27 AM	5:44 PM
Sunday	6:27 AM	5:45 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	7:57 AM	7:17 PM
Thursday	-	8:54 AM	8:14 PM
Friday	-	9:46 AM	9:10 PM
Saturday	-	10:34 AM	10:03 PM
Sunday	-	11:16 AM	10:54 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Cloudy	71° / 59°
Beijing	Fair	49° / 24°
Hong Kong	Fair	78° / 66°
Honolulu	Partly Cloudy	80° / 72°
London	Mostly Cloudy	50° / 42°
Los Angeles	Clear	73° / 50°
Manila	Heavy Rain Shower	91° / 79°
Melbourne	Mostly Cloudy	72° / 57°
Miami	Mostly Sunny	79° / 73°
New York	Clear	55° / 38°
Osaka	Rain	64° / 52°
Paris	Cloudy	54° / 37°
Busan	Fair	58° / 45°
Rome	Sunny	64° / 43°
Salem	Sunny	68° / 48°
San Francisco	Clear	63° / 46°
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	47° / 30°
Tokyo	Sunny	70° / 50°
Washington, DC	Mostly Sunny	37° / 26°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
2:42 AM	Low Tide	-0.65
10:00 AM	High Tide	1.76
3:20 PM	Low Tide	1.17
7:43 PM	High Tide	1.69

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 30, 2023

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA076	9:50AM	10:30AM	Daily

SAIPAN- NARITA (NRT)

UA824	7:05AM	9:45AM	1, 3, 5

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

PR 111	5:55AM	7:55AM	Daily
UA193	7:50PM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Palau
UA183	7:55PM	9:50PM	Daily

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

7C3403/2305	4:40AM	10:20PM	Daily
UA076/183	9:50AM	9:50PM	Daily via Guam
UA076/193	9:50AM	11:50PM	2, 5 via Guam, Palau

SAIPAN-INCHEON (ICN)

TW308	2:15AM	6:10AM	Daily
7C3403	4:40AM	8:35AM	Daily
7C3405	4:35PM	8:25PM	Daily

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	8:00AM	8:45AM	Daily

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

UA825	9:25PM	2:00AM+1	2, 4, 7

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA189	00:40AM	6:30AM	3, 6
PR110	10:05PM	3:55AM+1	Daily
UA192	10:40PM	6:30AM+1	2, 5 via Palau
UA184	10:55PM	4:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA189/174	00:40AM	8:45AM+1	3, 6 via Guam
UA192/174	10:40PM	8:45AM+1	2, 5 via Palau, Guam
UA184/174	10:55PM	8:45AM+1	1, 3, 4, 6,7 via Guam
7C2306/3406	11:15PM	3:30PM+1	Daily

INCHEON (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3406	10:10AM	3:30PM	Daily
TW307	7:45PM	1:15AM+1	Daily
7C3404	10:15PM	3:35AM+1	Daily

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines; PR, Philippine Airlines; TW, T'Way Air; OZ, Asiana Airlines; 7C, Jeju Air; BX, Air Busan • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF OCTOBER 30, 2023

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1301	SAIPAN	ROTA	08:30	09:00	Oct 21-31, 2023
1302	SAIPAN	ROTA	10:30	11:00	Daily
1303	SAIPAN	ROTA	15:30	16:00	Daily

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3101	ROTA	SAIPAN	9:30	10:00	Oct 21-31, 2023
3102	ROTA	SAIPAN	11:30	12:00	Saturday & Sunday
3103	ROTA	SAIPAN	13:30	14:00	Monday To Friday
3104	ROTA	SAIPAN	16:30	17:00	Daily

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
3401	ROTA	GUAM	11:30	12:00	Monday To Friday

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
4301	GUAM	ROTA	12:30	13:00	Monday To Friday

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
1201	SAIPAN	TINIAN	7:30	7:45	Daily
1202	SAIPAN	TINIAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	SAIPAN	TINIAN	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	SAIPAN	TINIAN	10:00	10:15	Daily
1206	SAIPAN	TINIAN	15:00	15:15	Daily
1207	SAIPAN	TINIAN	16:00	16:15	Daily
1208	SAIPAN	TINIAN	17:00	17:15	Daily

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	FROM	TO	DEPARTS	ARRIVES	FREQUENCY
2101	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:00	8:15	Daily
2102	TINIAN	SAIPAN	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	TINIAN	SAIPAN	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	TINIAN	SAIPAN	10:30	10:45	Daily
2106	TINIAN	SAIPAN	15:30	15:45	Daily
2107	TINIAN	SAIPAN	16:30	16:45	Daily
2108	TINIAN	SAIPAN	17:30	17:45	Daily

Business

Cyber Monday marks year's biggest online shopping day

By HALELUYA HADERO
AP BUSINESS WRITER

Consumers are scouring the internet for online deals as they begin to cap off the five-day post-Thanksgiving shopping bonanza with Cyber Monday.

Even though e-commerce is now part and parcel of our everyday lives and much of the holiday shopping season, Cyber Monday—a term coined back in 2005 by the National Retail Federation—continues to be the biggest online shopping day of the year, thanks to the deals and the hype the industry has created to fuel it.

Adobe Analytics, which tracks online shopping, expects consumers to spend between $12 billion and $12.4 billion on Monday, making it the biggest online shopping day of all time.

For several major retailers, the "Cyber Monday" sale is a days-long event that begins over the weekend. Amazon's, for example, kicked off on Saturday and runs through Monday. Target's two-day event began overnight on Sunday, while Arkansas-based Walmart kicked off its most recent discounts Sunday evening.

Consumer spending for Cyber Week—the five major shopping days between Thanksgiving and Cyber Monday—provides a strong indication on how much shoppers are willing to spend during the holiday season.

Shoppers have been resilient this year in the face of stubbornly high inflation, which recently reached its lowest point in more than two years yet remains painfully apparent in areas like auto and health insurance and some groceries, like beef and bread.

Economists, meanwhile, have cautioned strong spending is likely to wane in the coming months.

Stressed consumers are relying on savings to fuel their shopping and are facing more pressure from credit card debt, which has been on the rise along with delinquencies. They've also been embracing "Buy Now Pay Later" payment plans, which allow shoppers to make payments over time without—typically—charging interest.

The National Retail Federation expects holiday shoppers to spend more this year than last year. But the pace of spending will slow, it said, growing 3% to 4% compared to 5.4% in 2022.

A clear sense of consumer spending won't emerge until the government releases sales data for the holiday season, though preliminary data shows some good signs for the retail industry.

According to Adobe, shoppers spent a record $9.8 billion online Friday—marking a 7.5% jump from last year. Meanwhile, Salesforce, which also tracks online shopping, estimated that Black Friday online sales totaled $16.4 billion in the U.S. and $70.9 billion around the world. And Mastercard SpendingPulse, which tracks in-person and online spending across all payment forms, reported that overall Black Friday sales excluding automotive rose 2.5% from a year ago—a smaller but still notable jump compared to 2022's double-digit growth.

According to the firm, online sales rose 8.5%, while in-store purchases were up just 1.1%. Those numbers are not adjusted for inflation, which means that real sales in-stores could have dipped due to high prices.

Other data showed Black Friday saw some increases in store traffic—with large crowds in stores nationwide feeling more similar to pre-pandemic days.

RetailNext, which measures real-time foot traffic in stores, reported that store traffic rose 2.1% on Friday. Sensormatic Solutions, which also tracks store traffic, saw a bigger increase—reporting a 4.6% jump in shopper visits on Black Friday compared to a year ago. That also marks a turnaround from an average decline in store traffic seen throughout 2023 to date, Sensormatic said.

Biden says he's helped lower inflation ahead of 1st meeting of new supply chain council

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Joe Biden on Monday opened the first meeting of his supply chain resilience council by warning companies against price gouging and saying that his administration was working to lower costs for U.S. families.

"We know that prices are still too high for too many things, that times are still too tough for too many families," Biden said. "But we've made progress."

The president has blamed inflation on issues such as supply chains and Russia's 2022 invasion of Ukraine, while Republican lawmakers say the run-up in prices was triggered by the $1.9 trillion in coronavirus relief that Democrat Biden signed into law in 2021.

Biden used the council meeting to announce 30 actions to improve access to medicine and needed economic data as well as other programs tied to the production and shipment of goods.

He said he was tackling "junk fees," hidden charges that companies sneak into bills just because they can and customers have no alternative.

The council follows an earlier task force that was meant to address the supply chain problems that partially fueled higher inflation in 2021 as the United States recovered from the coronavirus pandemic.

Inflation remains a sore point for Biden's approval ratings ahead of next year's presidential election. After the annualized increase in the consumer price index peaked at 9.1% in June 2022, inflation has eased to a moderate 3.2%. The slowdown has not so far improved U.S. adults' feelings about the economy.

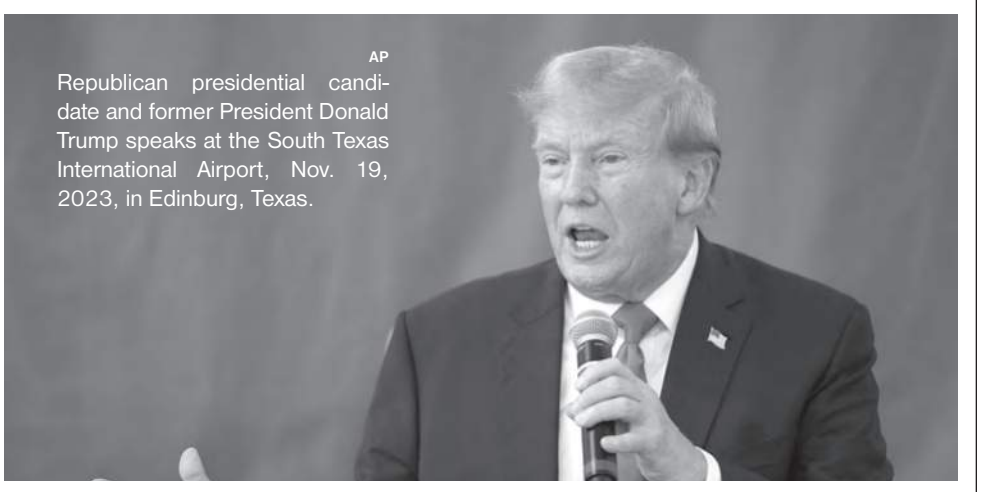
Biden said GOP policies would leave supply chains vulnerable, claiming that Republicans want to cut investments he has made in infrastructure and advanced manufacturing. The president also said companies that are taking advantage of inflation to boost profits are "price gouging."

Among the 30 new actions, Biden will use the Defense Production Act to have the Health and Human Services Department invest in the domestic manufacturing of needed medicines that are deemed crucial for national security. The Cabinet agency has identified $35 million to invest in the production of materials for injectable medicines.

The federal government will also improve its ability to monitor supply chains through the sharing of data among agencies. The Commerce Department has developed new tools to assess risks to the supply chain and has partnered with the Energy Department on the supply of renewable energy resources. Shipping companies are beginning to use new data resources from the Transportation Department on freight logistics.

Nation

Trump says he will renew efforts to replace 'Obamacare' if he wins



AP
Republican presidential candidate and former President Donald Trump speaks at the South Texas International Airport, Nov. 19, 2023, in Edinburg, Texas.

WASHINGTON (AP)—Former President Donald Trump threatened over the weekend to reopen the contentious fight over the Affordable Care Act after failing to repeal it while in the White House, saying he is "seriously looking at alternatives" if he wins a second term.

Trump's comments drew rebuke from Democratic President Joe Biden 's campaign, which cast them as another "extremist" proposal from the GOP front-runner. And they rapidly moved to mobilize a response, including new advertising in battleground states contrasting Biden's efforts to lower drug costs with Trump's comments.

"Donald Trump is campaigning on a threat to rip away health care from millions of Americans, so we're going to use every tool in our arsenal to make sure the American people know that lives are literally on the line next November," said Biden campaign communications director Michael Tyler.

The back-and-forth points to what could be a key issue in a general election rematch between Trump and Biden if both win their parties' nominations, as is widely expected.

Biden's team has long operated under the assumption that Trump would be the GOP nominee, given his commanding lead in the polls, and has stepped up efforts in recent weeks to cast his proposals as extreme and to paint him as a danger to democracy. Biden, in particular, has begun painting a vision of a catastrophic future if Trump wins—a strategy that could motivate lukewarm Democratic voters who may be driven more by a desire to stop Trump than to deliver a second term to Biden amid lingering concerns over high inflation, the direction of the country and his age.

Health care has generally been a better issue for Democrats than Republicans, who have largely abandoned efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act in recent years.

And Biden's campaign quickly seized the opportunity. Beyond the new ads, the campaign will host a press call Tuesday with former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper to highlight the potential impact of repealing the law, while state Democratic parties in swing states will host their own events.

"Donald Trump's America is one where millions of people lose their health insurance and seniors and families across the country face exorbitant costs just to stay healthy. Those are the stakes next November," Biden-Harris 2024 spokesperson Ammar Moussa said in a statement.

ACROSS THE NATION

Suspect in shooting of 3 men of Palestinian descent near University of Vermont pleads not guilty

BURLINGTON, Vt. (AP)—Three college students of Palestinian descent out for a walk in Vermont were seriously injured over the weekend when a man shot them at close range on a city street—an attack being investigated as a possible hate crime, authorities said Monday. Jason J. Eaton, 48, made his initial court appearance by video from jail on three counts of attempted murder, and a plea of not guilty was entered on his behalf on Monday. He was ordered held without bail. The U.S. Department of Justice, along with Vermont authorities, were investigating whether Saturday's shooting was a hate crime amid an increase in threats against Jewish, Muslim and Arab communities across the U.S. since the Israel-Hamas war began, Attorney General Merrick Garland said. "There is understandable fear in communities across the country," he said. The three men, all age 20, were spending their Thanksgiving break in Burlington, and were out for a walk while visiting one of the victims' relatives when they were confronted by a white man with a handgun, police said.

Rosalynn Carter tributes highlight her reach as first lady and humanitarian

AMERICUS, Ga. (AP)—Hundreds turned out to salute Rosalynn Carter on Monday with the former U.S. first lady and global humanitarian's final journey from her rural hometown to the Jimmy Carter Presidential Center in Atlanta as her family began three days of memorials following her death at age 96. The former president, who is 99 and has spent the past 10 months in home hospice care, plans to attend a memorial church service Tuesday in Atlanta for his partner of more than 77 years, The Carter Center confirmed. Rosalynn Carter died Nov. 19. The tributes started Monday morning as Rosalynn Carter's casket traveled by motorcade through the Carters' native Sumter County, where well-wishers gathered along the route in their tiny hometown of Plains and attended a wreath-laying ceremony at the college from which she graduated in 1946. Lyndea Brown drove to the short ceremony at Georgia Southwestern State University from nearby Albany, saying she wanted to salute "a remarkable woman" who attended local cancer benefits and fought for rural health services. "They were always real hometown people," Brown said. "We don't get presidents and first ladies like that anymore, people who have true hometown roots and understand what it's like to grow corn and peanuts and whatever else and to struggle over health care."

Japan, Vietnam agree to boost ties

TOKYO (AP)—Japan and Vietnam on Monday agreed to strengthen their security and economic ties in the face of China's growing influence in the region.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida and Vietnamese President Vo Van Thuong held talks in Tokyo and agreed to broaden their security cooperation, work on defense equipment and technology transfers and start discussing a new Japanese aid program for militaries of like-minded developing countries in the region.

» Start discussing Japanese military aid amid China threat

The two leaders said the Japan-Vietnam relationship would become a "comprehensive strategic partnership," bringing their ongoing cooperation to "new heights and to further expand it to new fronts," according to their joint statement provided by Japan's Foreign Ministry.

Japan has been rapidly developing closer ties with Vietnam, a key southeast Asian country that has important security and economic roles in the region faced with China's rise and rivalry with the United States and other Western nations.

Monday's announcement meant that Japan has now gained the status of Vietnam's top-tier partners, along with the United States, China and India.

At a joint news conference after their meeting, Kishida said Vietnam is "a key partner in achieving a free and open Indo-Pacific." Thuong said that close cooperation between the two countries contributes to the region's peace and prosperity.

Under the Official Security Assistance, Japan recently agreed to provide a coastal surveillance radar to the Philippines, another strategically important Southeast Asian country for Japan and the U.S. amid escalating tensions over Taiwan, which Beijing claims as its territory.

Kishida's government in December adopted new security strategy, involving significant military buildup, including counterstrike capability in a major shift from the country's post-war self-defense-only principle.

Japan in recent years has also provided a number of patrol vessels to Vietnam to help strengthen its law enforcement capability at sea. Vietnam is one of several countries defending their territorial interest against China in the disputed South China Sea. Japan has had a longstanding territorial dispute with China over islands in the East China Sea.

Kishida and Thuong agreed to expand their cooperation in wide range of areas from trade, climate change and economy to achieve a "free and open Indo-Pacific."

Thoung, who is on a four-day visit as a rare state guest marking the two countries' 50th anniversary of diplomatic ties, is also to visit the Imperial Palace for a meeting and lunch hosted by Emperor Naruhito and Empress Masako. He is to give a speech at the Lower House, the more powerful of Japan's two parliamentary chambers, and visit a hydrogen energy facility in Fukuoka in southern Japan.

N. Korea restores border guard posts as tensions rise over satellite launch

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea is restoring front-line guard posts that it had dismantled during a previous period of inter-Korean rapprochement, South Korea's military said Monday, after animosities spiked between the rivals over the North's recent spy satellite launch.

The two Koreas previously dismantled or disarmed 11 of their guard posts inside their heavily fortified border, called the Demilitarized Zone, under a 2018 deal meant to ease front-line military confrontations. But the deal is now in danger of being scrapped as both Koreas openly threaten to breach it.

The 2018 agreement required the two Koreas to halt aerial surveillance and live-fire exercises at no-fly and buffer zones that they established along the DMZ, as well as remove some of their front-line guard posts and land mines. The deal left South Korea with 50 board guard posts and North Korea with 150.

After North Korea claimed to place its first military spy satellite into orbit on Nov. 21, South Korea said it would partially suspend the deal and resume aerial surveillance along the DMZ in response. South Korea said its response was "a minimum defensive measure" because the launch showed the North's intentions to strengthen its monitoring of the South and improve its missile technology.

North Korea immediately slammed South Korea's decision, saying it would deploy powerful weapons at the border in a tit-for-tat measure. The North said it also won't abide by the 2018 deal any longer.

South Korea's Defense Ministry said in a statement Monday that it detected North Korea building guard posts at border sites where its dismantled guard posts once stood, and that North Korea deployed troops and heavy weapons there.

The ministry distributed to media outlets photos of North Korean soldiers building a guard post and moving a suspected recoilless rifle to a newly built trench.

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol ordered the military to keep a close watch on the North and maintain a firm readiness, according to his office. The South Korean Defense Ministry later said it's ready to "promptly and strongly punish" North Korea over any provocation that it launches.

South Korea, the United States and others strongly condemned the North's satellite launch, which they viewed as a provocation that threatens regional peace. United Nations Security Council resolutions ban any satellite launches by North Korea because the world body regards them as covers for testing its long-range missile technology. North Korea says it has sovereign rights to launch spy satellites to cope with what it says are escalating U.S.-led military threats.

On Monday, Kim Son Gyong, a senior North Korean Foreign Ministry official, called the U.S. and others' condemnation of the satellite launch "a typical expression of the most hideous and brazen-faced violation of sovereignty that denies the justification of the existence" of North Korea.

South Korean officials said they confirmed the North Korean satellite entered orbit. But they said they need more time to verify whether the satellite is functioning normally.

North Korea's state media said Monday that leader Kim Jong Un was shown pictures taken by the spy satellite of a military facility in the U.S. Pacific territory of Guam. State media earlier said Kim had been presented with satellite photos of U.S. military bases in Hawaii and key sites in South Korea. North Korea hasn't released those satellite images.

Kim previously said the satellite gives North Korea "eyes overlooking a very long distance and a strong fist beating a very long distance."

Many experts doubt the satellite's ability to take high-resolution images, though they said it would still be militarily useful for the North.

World

Israel, Hamas agree to extend ceasefire for two more days

AP

Released Palestinian prisoners arrive in the West Bank town of Ramallah Tuesday Nov. 28, 2023.

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP)—Israel and Hamas agreed to extend their cease-fire for two more days past Monday, raising the prospect of further exchanges of militant-held hostages for Palestinians imprisoned by Israel and a longer halt to their deadliest and most destructive war.

Eleven Israeli women and children, freed by Hamas, entered Israel Monday night after more than seven weeks in captivity in Gaza in the fourth swap under the original four-day truce, which began Friday and was due to run out. Thirty-three Palestinian prisoners released by Israel arrived early Tuesday in east Jerusalem and the West Bank town of Ramallah. The prisoners were greeted by loud cheers as their bus made its way through the streets of Ramallah.

The deal for two additional days of cease-fire, announced by Qatar, raised hopes for further extensions, which also allow more aid into Gaza. Conditions there have remained dire for 2.3 million Palestinians, battered by weeks of Israeli bombardment and a ground offensive that have driven three-quarters of the population from their homes.

Israel has said it would extend the cease-fire by one day for every 10 additional hostages released. After the announcement by Qatar—a key mediator in the conflict, along with the United States and Egypt—Hamas confirmed it had agreed to a two-day extension "under the same terms."

But Israel says it remains committed to crushing Hamas' military capabilities and ending its 16-year rule over Gaza after its Oct. 7 attack into southern Israel. That would likely mean expanding a ground offensive from devastated northern Gaza to the south.

Monday's releases bring to 51 the number of Israelis freed under the truce, along with 19 hostages of other nationalities. So far, 150 Palestinians have been released from Israeli prisons.

After weeks of national trauma over the roughly 240 people abducted by Hamas and other militants, scenes of the women and children reuniting with families have rallied Israelis behind calls to return those who remain in captivity.

"We can get all hostages back home. We have to keep pushing," two relatives of Abigail Edan, a 4-year-old girl and dual Israeli-American citizen who was released Sunday, said in a statement.

Hamas and other militants could still be holding up to 175 hostages, enough to potentially extend the cease-fire for two and a half weeks. But those include a number of soldiers, and Hamas is likely to make much greater demands for their release.

The newly released hostages included three women and nine children—including 3-year-old twin girls and their mother—from the kibbutz Nir Oz, a community near Gaza that was hard hit in Hamas' Oct. 7 attack. The kibbutz said 49 of its residents remain in captivity, including the father of the twins. The Israeli military said late Monday that the hostages were undergoing initial medical checks in Israel before being reunited with their families.

Most of the hostages freed so far have appeared to be physically well. But 84-year-old Elma Avraham, released Sunday, was airlifted to Israel's Soroka Medical Center in life-threatening condition because of inadequate care, the hospital said.

Avraham's daughter, Tali Amano, said her mother was "hours from death" when she was brought to the hospital. Avraham is currently sedated and has a breathing tube, but Amano said she told her mother of a new great-grandchild who was born while she was in captivity.

Avraham suffered from several chronic conditions that required regular medications but was stable before she was kidnapped, Amano said Monday.

So far, 19 people of other nationalities have been freed during the truce, mostly Thai nationals. Many Thais work in Israel, largely as farm laborers.

France said three of the hostages released Monday were French-Israeli dual citizens, two 12-year-olds and one 16-year-old. The French government is ''working tirelessly" to free five other French citizens held hostage, the French Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The Palestinian prisoners released so far have been mostly teenagers accused of throwing stones and firebombs during confrontations with Israeli forces, or of less-serious offenses. But some were convicted in alleged attempts to carry out stabbings, bombings and shootings. Many Palestinians view prisoners held by Israel, including those implicated in attacks, as heroes resisting occupation.

The freed hostages have mostly stayed out of the public eye, but details of their captivity have started to trickle out.

Good Housekeeping

Tips to display poinsettias during the holiday season

By MELINDA MYERS
Star Tribune (Minneapolis)

Nothing says the holidays like a poinsettia. This year, try some new ways to display this festive plant.

Poinsettias are available in a variety of colors including white, pink, hot pink, yellow, peach, marbled and speckled. These colorful parts of the plant, often referred to as flowers, are actually modified leaves called bracts. The real flowers are small, yellow and appear at the tip of the stem surrounded by the bract.

Look for new places to display your poinsettia. Place a plant on a side or serving table. Remove the foil and set the plant in a decorative container. Try a hot pink poinsettia in a white pot or several different colors set in a serving tray, basket or unique container. Add a table runner, candlestick, bowl of colorful fruit or other decorative touches.

Dress up individual or a group of poinsettias. White poinsettias donned with colorful berries, Chinese lantern pods and bobbles may be all you need for an eye-catching display.

Use poinsettias as a centerpiece for your holiday meals. Place several potted poinsettias in the middle of the table. Cover the plastic pots with greens. Then add some colorful pepper berries, cranberries, apples or ornaments.

Compact poinsettias such as the Princettia® poinsettia with its abundant vibrant flowers work well for this application. Your guests will be able to see across the table as they visit over dinner, enjoying the holiday ambience created by these beautiful plants.

Dress up each place setting with a cut poinsettia bloom. Simply cut the flowers off a potted poinsettia plant to the desired length. Place it in a floral water pick, the water-filled tubes used for cut flowers. Tuck the bloom into a napkin, set it in a small bud vase or add a ribbon to dress it up. They make great party favors for your guests.

DREAMSTIME/TNS
Poinsettias are available in a variety of colors including white, pink, hot pink, yellow, peach, marbled and speckled.

What do I need to know about my water heater?

By PAUL F. P. POGUE
Ask Angi

Your water heater most likely numbers among the appliances you think about least in your home. But when things go wrong, you'll care about it very quickly, and that gets even more urgent during the winter months. Here are 10 things you need to know about your water heater.

1 Look out for trouble: Early signs of water heater problems that will call for professional repair include odors in water, rust-colored water, lack of hot water and temperature fluctuations. It's good to catch problems early, since the average water heater repair cost is $600 and the sooner you find the problem, the less expensive repairs tend to be.

2 Inspect it regularly: Every two months, perform a close inspection of your heater. Clear away debris, verify that it's properly ventilated, check the drain pan and empty it if necessary, and look for scorch marks on the base of the heater.

3 Drain and flush it yearly: Sediment buildup poses a threat to tank-style heaters. Drain and flush it every year to keep this from damaging and possibly destroying your heater. A pro can do the work for an average of $75 to $200.

4 Tank or Tankless?: Traditional tank water heaters heat a large amount of water and keep it in reserve in a tank. Tankless water heaters heat the water as it passes through. Tankless takes up less space but costs more to install.

5 Water Heater Cost: A tank water heater costs around $1,300 installed and has a lifespan of 8 to 12 years. A tankless heater costs $2,400 on average, but you can expect to get 20 years of usable service life from one.

6 Shutoff Valve: All water heaters should have shutoff valves to block water or gas flow in event of a leak. Make sure you identify these valves in advance. A lot of water can spill in the seconds you're fumbling to find it otherwise.

7 Other Types: Tank and tankless water heaters are by far the most common models. But you can also seek out condensing, solar, heat pump or point-of-use water heaters, all of which bring their own pros and cons.

8 Smart Water Heating: Like so many other appliances, water heaters have entered the digital age. A smart water heater monitors usage and expends energy more efficiently, and you can control and check them from your phone.

9 Repair or Replace: If you're having trouble with a tank-style water heater and it's more than 10 years old, replacing it is probably the best idea. Rumbling sounds, cloudy water and leaks are other signs to replace soon.

10 Licensing: Licensing varies by state for water heater installers, but usually, you need a licensed plumber to do the work. You might also need a licensed gas pipefitter depending on heater type.

Tweet your home care questions with #AskingAngi and we'll try to answer them in a future column.

IN CELEBRATION OF HIS NEW LIFE

†Anthony
Indalecio Duenas

October 16, 1953 – November 23, 2023

In his new life, he now joins his:

Wife: †Andrea Villagomes Cabrera Duenas
Son: †Anthony Cabrera Duenas, Jr.
Grandchildren: †Antonette Duenas Ada and †Isidro George Duenas Ada
Parents: †Rufina Indalecio Duenas/ †Jose Palacios Duenas
†Mercedes V. Cabrera/ †Victorino Camacho Cabrera

His memories will forever live in the hearts of his:

Wife: Regina D. Duenas
Children & Family: Haviva Victorina D./ Raymond S. Saures
- Joseph Victorino D. Ada (Joehani L. Ada)
- Geovie Ann Marie D. Ada/ Richard Villagomez (Luke Joseph, Isaiah Jerome, Avianna Marie)
- George Anthony D. Ada

Patrick Joseph/ Ruby Jane
- Patrick T. Duenas, Jr./ Alyssa Clarke
- Kiesha Ann T. Duenas
- Riley Duenas

Christina Akie C. Duenas/ Oliver T. Iquel
- Kiana Keoni D. Demapan/ Julius Paul (Blaine Abel D. Paul)
- Ginni A. Demapan/ Lance Camacho
- Roque D. Camacho

Raymon Ignacio C. Duenas/ Virginia A. Omar Duenas
- Dray Anton O. Duenas
- Dayvin Ray O. Duenas
- Devanie Andrea O. Duenas

Children at Heart: Edgie D. Alvares, Alekhine D. Alvarez, Cici Biado/ Joe Ada (Franchesca, Xander), Catherine/ Kevin Toves (Kalel Cayden)

Brothers, Sisters, and In-laws: Joseph I. Duenas (Juanita DLG.) & Family, Pedro I. Duenas & Family, Teresita D. Oikawa (†Minoru) & Family, Jesusa Hernandez (Roger) & Family, Rufina Mostales (Riolante) & Family, Vicente Duenas & Family, Manuel Duenas (Molly Ann) & Family, Rita Verder (Noel) & Family, Thomas Duenas (Thelma) & Family, Raymond Duenas & Family, Bernita D. (Ted Cruz) & Family, Trinidad Duenas & Family, Rosalia C. Duenas (†Albert) & Family, †Francisco V. (Linda Cabrera) & Family, Ignacio V. (Anicia Cabrera) & Family, Leonardo V. Cabrera (Jovie Quitugua) & Family, †Joseph V. Cabrera & Family, †Vicente V. (Medina Cabrera) & Family, Matilde C. (Pete Igitol) & Family, Ramon V. (Elsie P. Cabrera & Family)

Daily Mass of Intention is celebrated each evening at 6:00 pm at San Antonio Church. Holy Rosary is being prayed nightly right after the 6:00 pm mass.

Funeral Services will be held on Friday, December 1, 2023. His remains will be escorted from CHCC chapel at 7:00 am to San Antonio church. Responso Service and Holy Rosary will follow upon arrival at San Antonio Church. Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated at 11:00 am followed by interment service at Chalan Kanoa Cemetery where he will be at a peaceful rest.

Please Join Us in Prayers.

Regina D. Duenas and Children

Life & Style

Merriam-Webster's word of the year for 2023: Authentic

NEW YORK (AP)—In an age of deepfakes and post-truth, as artificial intelligence rose and Elon Musk turned Twitter into X, the Merriam-Webster word of the year for 2023 is "authentic."

Authentic cuisine. Authentic voice. Authentic self. Authenticity as artifice. Lookups for the word are routinely heavy on the dictionary company's site but were boosted to new heights throughout the year, editor at large Peter Sokolowski told The Associated Press in an exclusive interview.

"We see in 2023 a kind of crisis of authenticity," he said ahead of Monday's announcement of this year's word. "What we realize is that when we question authenticity, we value it even more."

AP

A Merriam-Webster dictionary sits atop their citation files at the dictionary publisher's offices on Dec. 9, 2014, in Springfield, Mass.

Sokolowski and his team don't delve into the reasons people head for dictionaries and websites in search of specific words. Rather, they chase the data on lookup spikes and world events that correlate. This time around, there was no particularly huge boost at any given time but a constancy to the increased interest in "authentic."

This was the year of artificial intelligence, for sure, but also a moment when ChatGPT-maker OpenAI suffered a leadership crisis. Taylor Swift and Prince Harry chased after authenticity in their words and deeds. Musk himself, at February's World Government Summit in Dubai, urged the heads of companies, politicians, ministers and other leaders to "speak authentically" on social media by running their own accounts.

"Can we trust whether a student wrote this paper? Can we trust whether a politician made this statement? We don't always trust what we see anymore," Sokolowski said. "We sometimes don't believe our own eyes or our own ears. We are now recognizing that authenticity is a performance itself."

Merriam-Webster's entry for "authentic" is busy with meaning.

There's "not false or imitation: real, actual," as in an authentic cockney accent. There's "true to one's own personality, spirit or character." There's "worthy of acceptance or belief as conforming to or based on fact." There's "made or done the same way as an original." And, perhaps the most telling, there's "conforming to an original so as to reproduce essential features."

"Authentic" follows 2022's choice of "gaslighting." And 2023 marks Merriam-Webster's 20th anniversary choosing a top word.

The company's data crunchers filter out evergreen words like "love" and "affect" vs. "effect" that are always high in lookups among the 500,000 words it defines online. This year, the wordsmiths also filtered out numerous five-letter words because Wordle and Quordle players clearly use the company's site in search of them as they play the daily games, Sokolowski said.

Sokolowski, a lexicologist, and his colleagues have a bevy of runners-up for word of the year that also attracted unusual traffic. They include "X" (lookups spiked in July after Musk's rebranding of Twitter), "EGOT" (there was a boost in February when Viola Davis achieved that rare quadruple-award status with a Grammy) and "Elemental," the title of a new Pixar film that had lookups jumping in June.

Rounding out the company's top words of 2023, in no particular order:

RIZZ: It's slang for "romantic appeal or charm" and seemingly short for charisma. Merriam-Webster added the word to its online dictionary in September and it's been among the top lookups since, Sokolowski said.

KIBBUTZ: There was a massive spike in lookups for "a communal farm or settlement in Israel" after Hamas militants attacked several near the Gaza Strip on Oct. 7. The first kibbutz was founded circa 1909 in what is today Israel.

IMPLODE: The June 18 implosion of the Titan submersible on a commercial expedition to explore the Titanic wreckage sent lookups soaring for this word, meaning "to burst inward." "It was a story that completely occupied the world," Sokolowski said.

DEADNAME: Interest was high in what Merriam-Webster defines as "the name that a transgender person was given at birth and no longer uses upon transitioning." Lookups followed an onslaught of legislation aimed at curtailing LGBTQ+ rights around the country.

DOPPELGANGER: Sokolowski calls this "a word lover's word." Merriam-Webster defines it as a "double," an "alter ego" or a "ghostly counterpart." It derives from German folklore. Interest in the word surrounded Naomi Klein's latest book, "Doppelganger: A Trip Into the Mirror World," released this year. She uses her own experience of often being confused with feminist author and conspiracy theorist Naomi Wolf as a springboard into a broader narrative on the crazy times we're all living in.

CORONATION: King Charles III had one on May 6, sending lookups for the word soaring 15,681% over the year before, Sokolowski said. Merriam-Webster defines it as "the act or occasion of crowning."

DEEPFAKE: The dictionary company's definition is "an image or recording that has been convincingly altered and manipulated to misrepresent someone as doing or saying something that was not actually done or said." Interest spiked after Musk's lawyers in a Tesla lawsuit said he is often the subject of deepfake videos and again after the likeness of Ryan Reynolds appeared in a fake, AI-generated Tesla ad.

DYSTOPIAN: Climate chaos brought on interest in the word. So did books, movies and TV fare intended to entertain. "It's unusual to me to see a word that is used in both contexts," Sokolowski said.

COVENANT: Lookups for the word meaning "a usually formal, solemn, and binding agreement" swelled on March 27, after a deadly mass shooting at The Covenant School in Nashville, Tennessee. The shooter was a former student killed by police after killing three students and three adults.

Interest also spiked with this year's release of "Guy Ritchie's The Covenant" and Abraham Verghese's long-awaited new novel, "The Covenant of Water," which Oprah Winfrey chose as a book club pick.

Stephen Colbert recovering from surgery

First this fall, another round with COVID-19 shuttered Stephen Colbert's "The Late Show." Now the show is again sidelined as the host recovers from a burst appendix.

The comedian revealed on social media Monday that he's recovering after surgery, wiping out planned shows for Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. "Going forward, all emails to my appendix will be handled by my pancreas," he joked.

Colbert had a busy three shows planned, including guests Jennifer Garner, Baz Luhrmann, Patrick Stewart and Kelsey Grammer, the return of former bandleader Jon Batiste and Barbra Streisand was to take "The Colbert Questionert." ***(AP)***

Wife has a new kind of workout in mind

DEAR ABBY: I've been married to the most amazing woman for 30 years. She became a personal trainer and is in incredible shape. I'm not in her kind of shape, and I can't perform too well sexually, even with ED meds. She recently asked if she could have her (sexual) needs taken care of by a young client she trains. I'm OK with it, since I'm sympathetic to her desires, as long as she doesn't fall in love. Your thoughts?

WANTS WHAT'S BEST FOR HER

DEAR WANTS: The three of you are adults and capable of making your own decisions, but I am hesitant to bless this because it is so risky. Make sure to iron out all of the variables that may occur. She might fall in love with her client; he may fall in love with her. (Or not.) If he decides to move on, what will the effect be on her and you? Before you agree to this arrangement, think long and hard.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: My stepdaughter, "Lily," who lives in Canada, is married to an American, "Tom." Somehow, collection agencies have connected Tom to my husband and me, and we have been receiving letters addressed to him. I opened one by mistake and learned the extent of his debt.

Now we are receiving two different letters each month for him, and I fear he may have even more debt than I have discovered. We don't know if Lily is aware of their financial situation. They have spoken about moving to the States, but I don't know if she would still be open to that if she knew about the debt collectors. They are already struggling financially and have a young child.

How should we broach this subject with them? Should we speak to them together, individually or just hand over the mail and stay out of it? We don't like the idea of her being misled. This is casting a shadow over our upcoming vacation together.

SHOCKED IN THE EAST

DEAR SHOCKED: I vote for addressing this subject with Lilly and her husband in person and handing them the letters you have received, including the one that was opened in error. Your stepdaughter may or may not be aware of what she is in for, and it would be unfair not to let her know if she has been kept in the dark.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I recently had a blow-up with my father because he is buying an $8,500 used car for my sister's boyfriend. The BOYfriend is almost 50 and divorced three times. He is currently without a job or transportation. Meanwhile, my father is unwilling to help me fix the vehicle I own. Your thoughts?

DISAPPOINTED SON IN FLORIDA

DEAR SON: I can see why you might be upset, but it is your father's money, and he is entitled to do with it as he wishes. My thought is that you should not count on your father to bail you out—for anything. Your father may have chosen to do this to get the financial pressure off your sister.

■■■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable – and most frequently requested – poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby – Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

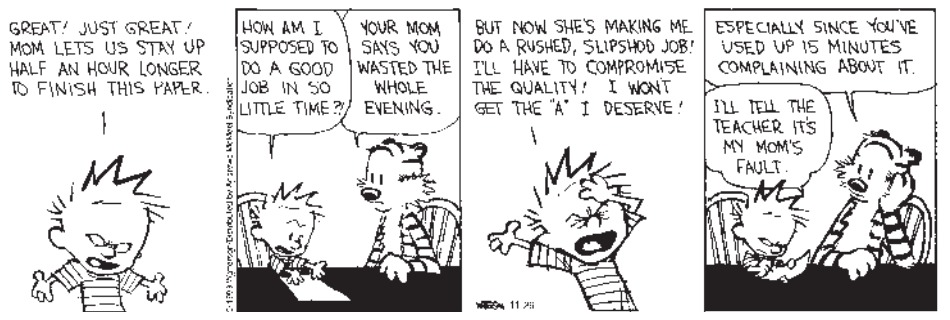
By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


GREAT! JUST GREAT! MOM LETS US STAY UP HALF AN HOUR LONGER TO FINISH THIS PAPER.
HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO DO A GOOD JOB IN SO LITTLE TIME?!
YOUR MOM SAYS YOU WASTED THE WHOLE EVENING.
BUT NOW SHE'S MAKING ME DO A RUSHED, SLIPSHOD JOB! I'LL HAVE TO COMPROMISE THE QUALITY! I WON'T GET THE "A" I DESERVE!
ESPECIALLY SINCE YOU'VE USED UP 15 MINUTES COMPLAINING ABOUT IT.
I'LL TELL THE TEACHER IT'S MY MOM'S FAULT.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

CAN WE GET ANDRE BACK ON THE FRONT COUNTER?
WELL, THAT'S WHAT HE HAS ME DOING TODAY.
SIGH
FINE. 'OLD MAN COFFEE' IT IS.
NOT TEACHING MANNERS THESE DAYS, HUH?
I HONESTLY FIGURED YOUR OLD GARS WOULDN'T PICK THAT UP.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

HOW WAS WORK?
WELL, ANOTHER DAY CLOSER TO RETIREMENT.
WHAT WILL YOU DO IF SOCIAL SECURITY RUNS OUT BEFORE YOU RETIRE?
YEAH, I'LL NEED A JOB TO FILL THAT VOID.
SO, I'VE BEEN SUCKING UP TO THE WALMART GREETER, HOPING HE'LL TAKE ME IN AS HIS PROTEGE.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 "Today" rival, briefly
4 Former flier
7 Act of faith?
8 Warning sound
10 "Take responsibility!"
11 Villainous
13 Fall forecast
16 Hot temper
17 Gather
18 Bond rating
19 German river
20 Incline
21 Israel's Meir
23 Warning
25 Male children
26 "The Candy House" author Jennifer
27 "— a miracle!"
28 Japanese beer
30 Prattle
33 Texas cook-off
36 Equilibria
37 Dodge
38 Commercial cow
39 Author Morrison
40 Writer Rand
41 Tennis match division

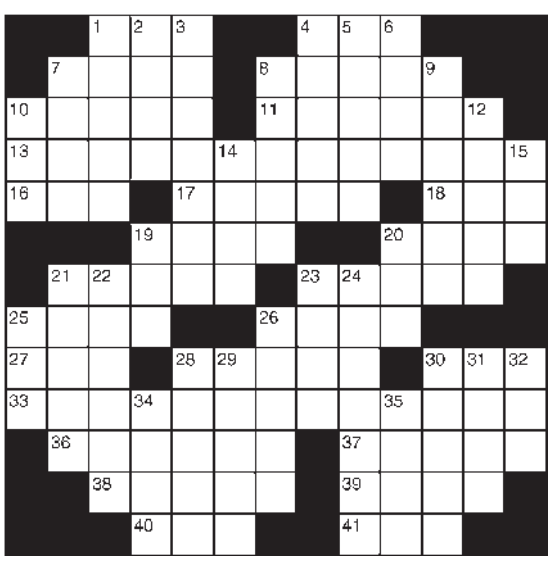
DOWN

1 Wish granter
2 Manhandle
3 Praise
4 Plum relatives
5 Heroic tales
6 Jog
7 "Cowardly Lion" actor
8 Egypt's Sadat
9 Sweater wool
10 Roman 1101
12 Handed out hands
14 Jewish community org.
15 Squealer
19 "Kidnapped" monogram
20 X, at times
21 Barbarians
22 Kind of inspection
23 Opposite of "fer"
24 Surgical knives
25 Bracketed word
26 Irregularly notched
28 — -face
29 Strand during a blizzard
30 Hog's greeting
31 Me, myself —
32 Spell-off
34 In — land
35 Soap additive

Solution time: 23 mins.

P	A	S	S		S	I	O		I	O	I	U
O	R	C	A		C	A	W		C	P	F	R
S	F	A	M		A	I	L	S	W	F	I	I
T	A	R	B	E	L	L		P	E	L	T	S
			A	M	P		P	A	R			
B	A	S	S	O		C	U	T	S	E	L	L
A	P	P			F	I	R			R	A	F
D	R	Y	C	E	L	L		B	A	R	B	S
			A	D	A		P	O	L			
A	B	A	S	E		C	O	W	B	E	L	L
B	U	S	H	N	E	L	L		A	L	E	E
E	R	I	E		L	E	A		N	I	N	A
S	G	T	S		T	O	R		Y	E	A	H

Yesterday's answer 11-29



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Anna Faris, 47; Don Cheadle, 59; Andrew McCarthy, 61; Howie Mandel, 68.

Happy Birthday: Stay focused and take care of responsibilities swiftly and without drama. Communicate explicitly to ensure nothing gets misconstrued. Filter through options and handle others with respect. Rely on yourself and avoid disappointment and setbacks. It's up to you to prove you have what it takes to reach your destination using experience, knowledge and skills. Substantiate what's doable based on facts, and carry on until you are satisfied with the results. Your numbers are 3, 7, 20, 24, 37, 44, 49.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19)*: Don't let mixed emotions take you down the wrong path. When in doubt, take a breather and review what's transpired. Put your money and possessions in a safe spot, and question anything that sounds suspicious. Don't count on others; initiate opportunities and follow through. ✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20)*: Keep communicating until you receive the information you want. Getting in touch with people from your past will be educational. Don't hesitate to call or act on a gut feeling if an opportunity is within reach. A change will initiate stability and personal growth. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20)*: Don't gossip or explain your actions. Concentrate on what offers peace of mind and more time to spend with loved ones. An innovative idea will require discipline to make it work without overspending. Focus on earning and saving, not squandering. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22)*: Plan your actions and distribute information with a long-term plan. Know what you want, and you'll decrease drama. Check in with people who offer constructive suggestions, and you'll gain ammunition to deal with those trying to meddle with your plans. ✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22)*: Take a break and allow yourself to mull over anything you are considering pursuing. The information you receive isn't likely to be exact. Don't make decisions without finalizing costs and anything else that needs to be corrected. Personal growth and home improvements are favored. ✪✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22)*: Resist letting outside interference influence you. Keep your intentions to yourself and focus on what's important to you. Make changes and actively participate in getting what you want. Networking will lead to helpful information and connections. ✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22)*: Determine the best route before beginning your journey. Use charm to gather information from a reliable source. Be ready to do your part, keep promises and reap the rewards, but don't expect to get something for nothing. ✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21)*: Keep close tabs on your investments and joint ventures. Ask questions, take notes and be prepared to adjust quickly when necessary. Hesitation will cause confusion and additional costs that can result in a missed opportunity. Size up situations and make your move. ✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21)*: Don't lose sight of your goal; be direct, factual and do what's right. Refuse to let your emotions get tangled up with revenge or allow anyone to put you in a vulnerable position. A positive attitude will help you reach your destination. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19)*: Make home improvements or alter your living arrangements to make your routine flow better. You'll get more in return if you appreciate and accommodate others. Positive change begins with kindness and consideration. Don't give up on someone when understanding is what's necessary. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18)*: Refuse to get involved in other people's drama or responsibilities. Offer suggestions, but go about your business. Don't let anyone interject until you finish taking care of what you need to. You can resolve a money, legal or medical matter by getting information from the source. ✪✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20)*: Follow directions and rules, and you'll avoid a run-in with authorities. Look for the most efficient and lucrative ways to use your skills, knowledge and experience. Someone who shares your interests will suggest an event that helps you blow off steam. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are tenacious, innovative and considerate. You are curious and outgoing.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

3				2			7	
5	7				3			9
2							6	4
7					5			
9	1		2					7
	3	5						8
			4			7		5
	4			5			1	
1	5	9	8				4	

Difficulty: ★★★ 11/29

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

6	2	4	3	1	9	7	8	5
1	9	8	5	7	6	3	4	2
5	3	7	4	8	2	6	1	9
8	4	2	9	6	5	1	3	7
7	5	1	8	3	4	9	2	6
9	6	3	7	2	1	4	5	8
2	8	9	6	4	3	5	7	1
4	1	5	2	9	7	8	6	3
3	7	6	1	5	8	2	9	4

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Difficulty: ★★ 11/28

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

THE MEKONG RIVER DELTA Solution: 8 letters

A	I	D	O	B	M	A	C	U	I	S	I	N	E	T
S	O	U	T	H	C	H	I	N	A	S	E	A	U	T
E	E	E	R	U	T	L	U	C	I	R	G	A	R	Y
A	T	A	D	I	S	T	A	N	C	E	E	O	T	T
S	E	A	L	I	A	S	E	E	R	T	P	N	E	I
O	K	R	O	E	T	I	E	A	A	I	I	R	M	C
N	R	Y	D	B	V	H	S	L	C	N	F	E	P	H
D	A	G	O	S	S	E	P	A	E	I	L	T	E	N
N	M	O	O	I	U	N	L	D	E	A	O	S	R	I
A	A	L	F	R	A	G	R	L	O	T	W	E	A	M
L	N	O	A	T	R	A	D	S	B	S	U	W	T	I
I	T	I	E	A	G	N	I	A	R	D	B	O	U	H
A	E	B	S	O	I	L	S	E	E	C	I	R	R	C
H	I	S	N	W	L	A	N	D	S	C	A	P	E	O
T	V	S	D	N	O	P	H	N	O	M	P	E	N	H

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Agriculture, Asia, Basa, Biology, Boat, Cambodia, Cuisine, Distance, Drain, Field, Fish, Flow, Grass, Herbs, Ho Chi Minh City, Landscape, Laos, Market, Nine Dragons, Phnom Penh, Ponds, Rice, Route, Seafood, Sea Level, Season, Soil, South China Sea, Temperature, Thailand, Tibetan Plateau, Tide, Trees, Tropical, Vietnam, Western, Wind

Yesterday's Answer: Survivor

Purchase the NEW Treasuries 55 and 56 in time for the holidays at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480. In Canada, call 1-855-232-2367!

LeBron suffers worst defeat as 76ers rout Lakers by 44 points

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—LeBron James never endured a lopsided basketball defeat like the one he suffered with Los Angeles in Philadelphia.

James has lost big before. His Miami Heat once got trounced by 36 points in the NBA Finals. The Indiana Pacers beat James and the Lakers by 42 in 2019.

But this blowout was an all-timer: By the time Joel Embiid clinched a triple-double in the third quarter, the 76ers were on their way to a 138-94 win over the Lakers on Monday night, the 44-point loss now the worst in James' career that dates to 2003.

"What needs to change in order for that to not happen again? A lot," James said, without elaboration.

The miserable milestones piled up for the Lakers. It was their worst loss to the 76ers in 290 games in the series.

It was so bad, James didn't even grab a rebound.

OK, one more: The 76ers beat the Lakers for the seventh straight time.

"That's my favorite team," Embiid said, again noting he learned of basketball through Kobe Bryant. "Any time I play against them, you want to get the win. But I do it every night anyways against every other team."

The box score tells part of the story. The 76ers hit 22 3-pointers to just seven for the Lakers, and even when Embiid sat out the entire fourth quarter, the 76ers still outscored them 40-14.

"We got killed on the 3-point line," James said. "They made shots. Give them credit."

The rest? It was just a lethargic effort from a team that seemed resigned early—the 76ers led by 25 in the first half—that was it was a good night to throw in the towel.

AP

Philadelphia 76ers' Joel Embiid, left, goes up for a shot past Los Angeles Lakers' Anthony Davis during the first half of an NBA basketball game, Monday, Nov. 27, 2023, in Philadelphia.

"Your competitive spirit has to be at a high level," Lakers coach Darvin Ham said. "It almost has to be bulletproof to a certain degree. You have to meet force with force. They outhustled us."

The reigning NBA MVP, Embiid finished with 30 points, 11 rebounds and 11 assists for his sixth career triple-double. It was Embiid's first of the season and his seventh career game with 10-plus assists.

Embiid's anticipated showdown with James never really materialized. James scored 18 points in 29 minutes but nothing he did could make a dent in the 76ers' lead. He has now played more minutes than any player in NBA history, with playoff time included.

"That doesn't mean much to me," James said.

Tyrese Maxey scored 31 points for the 76ers. Anthony Davis had 17 points and 11 rebounds for the Lakers.

The 76ers opened the game 3-point happy and hit 13, a season high for a half, on 26 shots.

Maxey hit four. The Lakers, though, left any Sixer not named Maxey or Embiid open and paid for it. Patrick Beverley hit three in the half and Marcus Morris Sr. went 3 for 3. Embiid buried one for a 64-39 lead.

The Lakers missed 7 of 10 3s in the half.

With Eagles QB Jalen Hurts watching courtside, Embiid blocked Davis with such authority the smack could be heard rows deep off the court.

Maxey scored 20 at the break as he tries to strengthen his bid for his first All-Star berth. Embiid had 17 as he makes a run at his third straight scoring title.

"You certainly don't go into a game like this expecting that kind of game to break out," 76ers coach Nick Nurse said. "When the 3 ball starts going in the way they did early, I think that just energizes everybody."

The 76ers put their 12th win away early.

They also scored points for trash talk when forward Paul Reed called Davis "a big flopper."

"You know, he's gonna be flailing," Reed said at shootaround.

Both coaches were bemused at why a backup poked Davis.

"Go guard him, I guess. Best of luck, Paul," Ham said.

No matter. The game was never competitive enough to worry much about fouls and flops.

The 76ers won their second straight after a two-game losing streak and could have Kelly Oubre Jr. back soon. Oubre averaged 16.3 points in eight games before he was injured in an alleged hit-and-run accident. He participated in shootaround and may join the 76ers on their upcoming two-game road trip.

NUGGETS 113, CLIPPERS 104

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Reggie Jackson scored 35 points, DeAndre Jordan had 21 points and 13 rebounds, and Denver rallied in the fourth quarter to beat Los Angeles without Nikola Jokic.

Former Clippers Jackson and Jordan combined for 20 points in the fourth, when the Nuggets trailed by 11 to start. Jackson began and ended a 22-6 spurt with 3-pointers that put the Nuggets ahead 99-94. In between, he fed Jordan for two vicious dunks.

The Nuggets were missing starters Jokic, Jamal Murray and Aaron Gordon, who average a combined 58.2 points. Jokic sat out the second game of a back-to-back because of low back pain. Murray has a right hamstring strain and Gordon has a right heel strain.

Kawhi Leonard led the Clippers with 31 points and Ivica Zubac had 23 points and 14 rebounds. Paul George picked up his fourth and fifth fouls early in the fourth. He finished with six points on 2-of-13 shooting.

WIZARDS 126, PISTONS 107

DETROIT (AP)—Kyle Kuzma had 32 points and 12 rebounds as Washington ended a nine-game losing streak with a rout of Detroit in a matchup of the NBA's worst teams.

Washington (3-14) won for the first time since a 132-116 victory over the Charlotte Hornets on Nov. 8. The Pistons (2-15) have lost 14 straight after beating the Chicago Bulls 118-102 on Oct. 28.

Kuzma, playing in his home state, added eight assists while committing two turnovers. Deni Avdija and Danilo Gallinari scored 16 for the Wizards.

Cade Cunningham led the Pistons with 26 points and seven assists. Jalen Duren had 12 points and 14 rebounds.

TRAIL BLAZERS 114, PACERS 110

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Jerami Grant scored 34 points and Deandre Ayton had 22 points and 13 rebounds to power Portland past Indiana.

Malcolm Brogdon added 24 points for the Trail Blazers, including a game-sealing basket in the closing seconds.

Tyrese Haliburton led Indiana with 33 points. Bruce Brown, Myles Turner and Bennedict Mathurin each had 11, but the Pacers were slowed by 20 turnovers and 8-for-33 shooting from 3-point range.

JAZZ 114, PELICANS 112

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Rookie Keyonte George scored a season-high 19 points to lead Utah over New Orleans for a sweep of their two-game series.

Jordan Clarkson chipped in 16 points and 10 assists for the Jazz. Walker Kessler added 14 points and eight rebounds off the bench. Simone Fontecchio scored 14 points.

Utah beat New Orleans for the fifth straight time and second time in three days after making 17 3-pointers, including six in the fourth quarter.

Zion Williamson scored 26 points for New Orleans, which lost despite shooting 50% from the field. Williamson, who did not play in the Pelicans' 105-100 loss on Saturday, shot 9 of 16 from the field and added seven assists.

Point differentials could come into play as NBA In-Season Tournament group phase ends

MIAMI (AP)—Say this for the NBA: It will have some drama for the final night of group play in the inaugural In-Season Tournament.

There are eight games left—all potentially having implications on who will advance.

All teams play four games in the group stage; 14 teams are already done and the other 16 teams wrap up their group slates on Tuesday. Every group winner will reach the quarterfinals, and the best second-place team from each conference will earn a wild-card spot.

There's a really good chance that tiebreakers to separate teams with 3-1 (or maybe even 2-2) records will come into play. The first tiebreaker is head-to-head, and the second is point differential—which certainly raises the possibility that a team with a lead as time is running out in an already-decided game might look for more points in the final seconds.

"We'll just focus on trying to get a win tomorrow," said Miami coach Erik Spoelstra, whose team plays host to Milwaukee on Tuesday. "That's the most important thing. We know what the differential has to be. You can't go into a game thinking that. That's not how you win games against good teams."

Indiana and the Los Angeles Lakers are the only two teams that have secured quarterfinal spots. Both went 4-0 in group play and are assured of having a home game for the start of the knockout round next week—either Dec. 4 or Dec. 5.

From there, 16 teams remain alive for the remaining six quarterfinal spots. The easiest things to figure out are these: if Milwaukee beats Miami and if Sacramento beats Golden State, then the Bucks and Kings will be the other two quarterfinal hosts.

Other than that, good luck figuring out all the possible tiebreakers.

"I know Tuesday is complicated," Boston forward Jayson Tatum said. "There's a million different things that can happen. So, that (stuff) is a little tricky. But I think it's been great. It gives guys something to look forward to early in the season."

The Celtics are one of the teams that could see their tournament fate decided by the point differential tiebreaker. Tatum likes the tournament in general; that tiebreaker, not so much.

"It's all about respecting the game and respecting your opponents," Tatum said. "So, that part, I'm not a fan of."

WHO IS STILL ALIVE?

This one is easy: the Pacers and Lakers are in, and the other six quarterfinal spots will go to some combination of these teams: Cleveland, Philadelphia, Atlanta, Milwaukee, New York, Miami, Charlotte, Orlando, Boston, Brooklyn, Phoenix, New Orleans, Houston, Sacramento, Minnesota and Golden State.

WHO IS OUT?

Detroit, Washington, Toronto, Chicago, Utah, Portland, Memphis, Denver, Dallas, the Los Angeles Clippers, Oklahoma City and San Antonio have been eliminated.

Bears outlast Vikings on 4th field goal by Santos after 4 interceptions

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—The Chicago Bears finally won one of these up-for-grab games after all those painful finishes.

Cairo Santos made a 30-yard field goal with 10 seconds left, his fourth of the night after a miss on the opening drive, and the Bears had four interceptions of Joshua Dobbs in a defense-dominated 12-10 victory over the Minnesota Vikings on Monday.

"Proud of everyone for fighting to the end, no matter what," said Justin Fields, who lost two fumbles in the fourth quarter before a third-and-10 completion to D.J. Moore for 36 yards put the ball at the 13 with 55 seconds left to set up the winning kick. The Bears (4-8) stopped a 12-game NFC North losing streak, including six in a row against the Vikings (6-6).

"He came back like a true leader does—somebody on the rise as a young quarterback. They just block that out and make that throw," said Moore, who had 11 catches for 114 yards.

The Vikings, who cautiously chose to hold star wide receiver Justin Jefferson out for another game with his hamstring injury, were as helpless as ever on offense with only a field goal by Greg Joseph at the end of the first half to show for the first 54-plus minutes. Dobbs threw the go-ahead score to T.J. Hockenson with 5:54 left, but the Vikings stalled out again after that at the worst possible time.

AP

Chicago Bears cornerback Kyler Gordon (6) celebrates with teammates defensive end Montez Sweat (98) and linebacker Dylan Cole (55) after intercepting a pass during the second half of an NFL football game against the Minnesota Vikings, Monday, Nov. 27, 2023, in Minneapolis.

After Fields rumbled for a first down, Josh Metellus jarred the ball loose that Anthony Barr recovered at the Chicago 43. The Vikings ran for no gain and 1 yard, before a screen pass lost 1 yard. Then Ryan Wright sailed his punt out of bounds, netting just 26 yards, and the Bears had the ball at their 22 instead of being pinned deep. Only 59 seconds came off the clock.

The Bears, who blew a 12-point lead with about three minutes left last week in defeat at Detroit, forced four turnovers for the second straight game. Jaylon Johnson, Jaquan Brisker, T.J. Edwards and Kyler Gordon had the interceptions, three off deflected balls.

"Turnovers really control the game, so it starts with me and taking care of the football with my decision-making," Dobbs said. "No matter what happens on the other end, it's giving the receiver a good ball and getting the ball where it needs to go based on the coverage. I acknowledge it. I'm frustrated with myself."

Gordon's diving grab with 12:32 to go and a 9-3 lead gave the Bears the ball at the Minnesota 38. But five plays later, Danielle Hunter—whose takedown of Fields in Chicago on Oct. 15 dislocated the quarterback's thumb and sidelined him for the next five games—dislodged the ball during a sack that Sheldon Day recovered at the Minnesota 23.

"We love the game on us," Gordon said. "We want to be the ones to close the game out and be clutch."

The Vikings went the other way in eight plays for their only their second drive of more than 30 yards all game, and the Bears were in danger of another late collapse. But they became just the third team in the NFL in the last 20 years to win without a touchdown, multiple turnovers and 50-plus penalty yards, according to Sportradar.

"Defense, I feel like we played lights out," Bears safety Eddie Jackson said. "We've just got to continue to get better when it comes to the finishes."

Dobbs had a devil of a time finding a rhythm. After sparking the Vikings to two victories after Kirk Cousins went down with a torn Achilles tendon, Dobbs has had a much tougher time the last two games.

The backflips during the BMX freestyle bike show at halftime actually accounted for the bulk of highlights, but only for the people in the building not in line for bathrooms or concessions. The ESPN audience might well have preferred the matchup be switched out under the flexible scheduling policy.

FIELDS TEST

The Bears are giving Fields, the 11th overall pick in the 2021 draft, a close look over the final month-plus of the season before determining whether to move forward with him as the quarterback with the long-term status of the coaching staff simultaneously muddied.

The game plan in the first half looked like it was devised precisely as an audition for Fields, frequently dropping him back in the pocket against the aggressive and unorthodox pressures directed by Vikings defensive coordinator Brian Flores. Fields went 12 for 12 for 100 yards in the first quarter and while he took three sacks he never made a bad throw while finishing 27 for 37 for 217 yards.

When Flores sent a zero blitz with seven rushers on fourth-and-10 from the Minnesota 38 on the last play of the first quarter, Fields managed to find tight end Cole Kmet sneaking uncovered over the middle for a 22-yard gain. That set up the first field goal by Santos, who missed a 48-yard try on the first drive.

Panthers fire Reich after 11 games and name Tabor their interim head coach

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—The Frank Reich era in Carolina is over after only 11 games.

The Carolina Panthers fired their coach on Monday following the team's NFL-worst 1-10 start in his first year at the helm.

Panthers owner David Tepper announced the move hours after several news outlets reported that he used a profanity as he was leaving the locker room following a 17-10 loss to the Tennessee Titans on Sunday.

Tepper hired Reich to fix one of the league's worst offenses over the past few seasons and develop Bryce Young, the No. 1 overall pick whom he gave up four draft picks and top wide receiver D.J. Moore to acquire this past offseason in the hopes of winning multiple Super Bowls.

Instead, the Panthers are assured a franchise-record sixth straight losing season.

The Panthers are 30-63 since Tepper bought the team from Jerry Richardson in 2018 for $2.275 billion and have never made the playoffs.

Special teams coordinator Chris Tabor will take over as interim head coach. Offensive coordinator Thomas Brown will become the team's play caller, with senior assistant Jim Caldwell serving as his special adviser.

Tabor's first move as interim coach was to fire quarterbacks coach Josh McCown and running backs coach Duce Staley, according to a person familiar with the situation. The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity Monday because the moves have not been announced.

McCown and Staley were handpicked by Reich to be assistants.

When Tepper makes his next head coaching hire after the season, it will be the seventh full-time or interim head coach to serve under him.

Tepper is scheduled to address reporters Tuesday at a news conference at Bank of America Stadium. The Panthers canceled all media access Monday.

Reich is the second NFL head coach to be fired this season, joining Josh McDaniels of the Las Vegas Raiders.

Reich was fired earlier in his tenure than any head coach since Pete McCulley, who went 1-8 with San Francisco in 1978. He is the seventh NFL head coach in the last six years to be fired during or after just one season, joining Lovie Smith (Houston, 2022), Nathaniel Hackett (Denver, 2022), David Culley (Houston, 2021), Urban Meyer (Jacksonville, 2021), Freddie Kitchens (Cleveland, 2019) and Steve Wilks (Arizona, 2018).

Phone calls and text messages sent to Reich seeking comment were not immediately returned.

Tepper has shown a lack of patience as a team owner. Reich is the Panthers' third head coach fired during the season under Tepper.

He also owns the Major League Soccer team in Charlotte and has fired two coaches in the organization's first two years of existence.

On the NFL front, Tepper inherited Ron Rivera as his head coach in 2018 but fired him less than two years later during the season. Perry Fewell finished out the season before Tepper gave Matt Rhule, who previously coached at Baylor, a seven-year, $63 million contract. But Rhule lasted less than 2 1/2 season before Tepper dismissed him and replaced him with Wilks, the Panthers' defensive coordinator, on an interim basis.

Tepper then hired Reich, who as offensive coordinator of the Philadelphia Eagles helped them win the Super Bowl before becoming head coach of the Indianapolis Colts, who fired him last season. Wilks is now the defensive coordinator for San Francisco.

Carolina still ranks near the bottom of the league in nearly every offensive category. The Panthers are 30th in the league in total offense and 30th in passing yards per game and haven't scored more than 15 points in a game since the bye week.

Reich had signed a four-year contract with the Panthers that runs through the 2026 season. Tepper will be on the hook for an estimated $9 million per season over the next three seasons.

Reich had experience running good NFL offenses, but that didn't translate over to the Panthers.

Young has been sacked 40 times this season, and the Panthers' offensive line has allowed 43 overall over in 11 games, fourth most in the NFL. Young has been under heavy pressure most of the season, making it difficult to evaluate his progress as a quarterback.

But the former Alabama product has failed to progress as a quarterback and ranks near the bottom of the league in most statistical categories. He has yet to throw for 250 yards in a game and has nearly as many interceptions (eight) as touchdown passes (nine).

Because of their record, the Panthers could possibly land the No. 1 pick in next year's draft, but that immediately would go to the Chicago Bears because of the trade for Young.

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
EDITOR

Pikaboo succeeds Cuki in Expert Class

Shane "Pikaboo" Alvarez surprised his dad, Cuki, with an early 52nd birthday gift by succeeding him as the champion of the Expert Class of last weekend's 2023 Turkey Cross at the at the Cowtown Race Park.

The 30-year-old Financial & Insurance Services Group staff lost the first heat to Guam's Blaze Aiken only to win the last two to top the division with 72 points.

Aiken, who topped the first heat on Day 1 on Saturday only to succumb to the younger Alvarez in the last two heats later that Saturday and Sunday, wound up with 69 points. Another Guamanian, Johnny Aguon, completed the Top 3 with 58 points.

Alvarez said he's extremely happy about winning this year's Expert Class and admitted it's one of the hardest things he's ever done in his life.

"Especially this year there were three heat races so it definitely was a grueling awesome battle. We were able to get the title last year for Turkey Cross so we knew they were gonna come hard this time around and after winning the season here I really wanted to put my No. 1 [ranking] to the test and see if I can beat the Guam crew," he said.

Alvarez did acknowledge that Guam riders haven't had any much practice these past few months.

"They lost their track after Smokin' Wheels so they didn't have a track to practice on for a while but they did what they could to get ready and they definitely brought the heat as always. We had a dry race on Saturday so it was really high speed and battles nonstop."

Track or no track in Guam, the battle between Alvarez and Aiken was intense nonetheless.

"The first heat I was able to get out front in the first lap and hold it for about seven laps then the arm pump really started to kick in... I was able to hold onto second place until the last lap which definitely kept me in the battle for No. 1 and I just had to win the second heat."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Maplas players pose for a group photo before a recent game in the Pacific Saipan Inc. Promo Invitational Basketball League at the Gualo Rai Basketball Court.

And that's what Alvarez went on to do aboard his trusty 2023 Kawasaki 250f.

"The second heat of the day I got the hole shot and rode as fast as I could while trying to stay composed and control my breathing because I needed to win and needed my arms to last... I kept feeding myself positive thoughts and focused on hitting my lines clean so I don't get more tired."

And on the last lap, Alvarez said he could hear Aiken revving right behind him especially on the last turn but he was able to hold him off until the checkered flag.

With both Alvarez and Aiken with a heat each, it set up perfectly for the winner-take-all showdown on the third heat on the last day of the Turkey Cross.

"On Sunday it started raining really hard from and it was a slippery race for every class. This made it even crazier because on a wet track it's anyone's game especially when the mud comes into play with vision. If you have a bad start, you're gonna have a bad time and a face full of mud. I was able to get the hole shot again, but the two Guam riders were right beside me. I tried to push them wide and steal their line but they were quick to read me and almost made the pass on the first turn we were all fighting for the hole shot but I was able to hold them off out the turn."

Aiken shadowed Alvarez in second place and the fight was on for Expert Class supremacy. Good thing the latter had some tricks up his motocross sleeves.

"Once I caught traction, I did my best to blast as much mud as I can so that it would be harder for them and I have clear vision. Even with that he was always right behind me. He even tried to make the pass twice but I would just edge him out and cause him to make a mistake. He would reel me back in but once he gets close, he would make tiny errors that would lose him a second or two and back to fighting to get right up next to me again."

Both riders were neck and neck the whole race and pretty much pushed each other past their limits.

"My hands were getting numb with 3-4 laps to go so I used my legs as much as I could, and once I saw the white flag (last lap) I got this burst of energy and just when I was about to give up, I got the feeling back into my hands. I made sure I stayed up on two wheels and I knew he had to be just as tired as I was. It was tough because it was still slippery everywhere so anything can happen. Thankfully I was able to hold him off again with about a 2-second lead and secured the win," said a relieved Alvarez.

He went on to dedicate the win to his old man, who last year edged him for all the marbles.

"He's not only my teacher and main competition but also our mechanic making sure our bikes are always ready to race and last. He takes care of all the many little things that play a huge part to keep the bike in tip top shape every time it goes out. This year I didn't have him to help me in the Expert Class because he hasn't been riding as much and didn't want to overdo it. But he reminded me that he wholeheartedly believed that I could do it. If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't have been able to dig as deep as I did and secure the No. 1 title."

Results of the other division of the 2023 Turkey Cross will be published in tomorrow's issue of *Saipan Tribune.*

Barrios, Ferrer top Pedal for Health road race

By MARK RABAGO
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EDITOR

A pair of Js — J.R. Barrios and J.C. Ferrer—topped the road bike division of the Saipan Unity Lions Club Pedal for Health Criterium Yearend Bike Race last Sunday in Marpi.

Barrios nipped Nap Dizon and Bob Ferrer in the 50-kilometer men's category that had bikers pedal three times around the Last Command Post-Mobil Tanapag-Last Command Post route.

The 40-year-old C&R Corp. employee crossed the finish line in 1:12.58 followed closely by Dizon and Ferrer with times of 1:12.59 and 1:13.00, respectively.

Meanwhile, J.C Ferrer was the lone racer in the women's division and finished with a time of 1:27:07.

The 40-year-old Barrios said the hardest part of the race was that it rained all the time. He was just glad that all the bikers helped each other by taking turns at the head of the peloton to help with the drafting.

He then dedicated his win in the Pedal for Health Criterium Yearend Bike Race to his family and Team C&R.

Like Barrios, J.C. Ferrer said the hardest part of the race was the rain.

"It was very slippery, while going downhill was the easiest because you're going fast."

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

J.R. Barrios, center, and J.C. Ferrer, second from right, topped the men's and women's division of the road bike long course division of last Sunday's Saipan Unity Lions Club Pedal for Health Criterium Yearend Bike Race. Second from left is men's runner-up Nap Dizon.

The 18-year-old Marianas High School senior then dedicated her victory to her father Bob, who's her "forever coach and partner in biking" and added that the Pedal for Health race was good practice for next week's Hell of Marianas Century Race, "because we don't have enough time to train."

Results of the mountain bike division and age group winners will be published in tomorrow's issue of *Saipan Tribune.*

Proceeds from the Saipan Unity Lions Club Pedal for Health Criterium Yearend Bike Race will be used to fund the Lions Club Global cause to cure children's cancer, prevent diabetes, and feed the hungry.

Event's sponsors include Herman's Bakery, Marpac, K.L. Carr Enterprises, Hongs Hardware, The Water Company, Chow Time Restaurant, and Atoy Bangting and other SULC members.

REDEMPTION

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it was a nice experience—I've never been on like that big of a stage." He added that for his 200m race today, he wants to break Tyrone Omar's CNMI record of a little over 22 seconds.

Andrew Camacho broke his record in the 100m race as well at 11.55 seconds.

For athletics coach Greg Iginoef, he said the team did well on their first day of athletics events. He was happy they broke their PB's and thanks the Tuvalu coach who's been helping the team during their training, and also thanked Dr. Ron Snyder. For Tan's gold medal run, he said, "I'd like to thank Tania for coming out. I know she's in school in Hawaii and she took time out just to come and represent. Thanks Tania and thanks to her coach, Kim Boyce, and her school for letting her come out and represent her [island] nation."

Golf's Jin makes Top 10

Although there was no medal for golf this time around, up-and-coming golf star, 16-year-old Zhi Min Jin placed in the Top 10 of the women's division out of more than 30 competitors at the end of Round 4 last Saturday at the Honiara Golf Course.

She capped the competition with a total of 313. Jin said of her competition, "I feel great to place eighth against the other amazing players. It wasn't the best course condition as well so I'm just proud that I managed to score in the 70s for the four days. Competition was alright; loved playing with new people."

In the men's division, Franco Santos was the best finisher at No. 15 with his total score of 312; Joseph Sasamoto scored 323; Ben Jones Jr. had 328, and Joe Camacho finished at 334. The team finished eighth overall.

Marco Peter, the team's manager said, "I was really proud of what Zhi was able to do—going from a 79 to shooting a low 77 on a really tough course. I think she has a bright future ahead of her because she has one of the most fluid swings. Everyone in the tournament said so too—they see her swing and said she's going to be a really good player. She's only 16 years old and she's able to keep her composure."

Overall, he said, the team "did okay. They did the best they could on a very big stage. The Pacific Games is just basically our Olympics."

BEACH

From page 20

lau and Tonga, but really excited for our game against Vanuatu, trying to get revenge from last year in the Mini Games."

As for how he felt in the match, he said, "I felt pretty good. It was also really humid to be honest. So, a couple points there, I was breathing hard, but overall, I felt very good."

Johnson and Mister arrived on Nov. 25 and had a practice run against Australia Monday afternoon.

Today at 12pm Solomon Islands Time (11am Saipan time), the boys will face off against Tonga, then later at 7pm (6pm Saipan Time), it's a rematch against Vanuatu—who beat them for gold in the 2022 Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games.

NMI men's va'a team breaks 2-minute barrier

The second day of va'a competitions went underway at DC Park and even if NMI didn't make it to the finals, it was a great day for the men's team as they came in under two minutes—1:59.85 in the V6 500m sprints repechage to claim the fastest time amongst Micronesian countries.

Despite a sick crew not feeling 100%, the men—Tyler Andrew, Yu Ling Chai, Terry Ruben, Mitchell Kukkun, Willie Cabrera, and Richark Sikkel—and women—Ashley Pangelinan, Jenisha Dubrall, Vinalynn Oronigo, Dayna Macaranas, Eva Weaver, and Momoko Halstead—gave it their all.

The NMI men's team placed fourth in the repechage and beat Palau who claimed fifth and Guam who claimed last place.

Va'a team manager Justin Andrew said of Day 2 competitions, "The course was perfect today—a lot flatter than yesterday and this was the perfect water for sprints. Our national team did very well today. The men's crew broke under 2 minutes and that's not very easy to do. Breaking 2 minutes and staying with the pack—I think that's a good accomplishment. We beat the two powerhouses in the northern hemisphere—Guam and Palau so we're very happy with our young crew."

Today, they are racing in the 1,500m which was scheduled for yesterday but was rescheduled due to readjustment of the course.

Leo Wania takes on the solo triathlon stage at 9:10am (8:10am Saipan time) today, while the men's national soccer team plays their final match against Tuvalu at 1pm (12pm Saipan time). The athletics team continues their events with Tania Tan competing in the 10,000m event.

2023 Honiara, Solomon Islands Pacific Games

LEIGH GASES

An incomplete va'a team poses after their V6 men and V6 women 500m races yesterday at DC Park.

LEIGH GASES

Andrew Johnson readies for his serve against Palau in the first day of beach volleyball competitions yesterday afternoon.

LEIGH GASES

The V6 500m sprints men's team poses for a photo after their race yesterday morning at DC Park. They finished the race under the 2-minute mark—beating Guam and Palau for fourth place.

LEIGH GASES

Tania Tan on the big screen of the National Sports Stadium during the national anthem of the awards ceremony Monday night after her gold medal win in the 5,000m race.

LEIGH GASES

The CNMI's Andrew Johnson and Logan Mister celebrate after landing a point against Palau on the first day of beach volleyball competitions yesterday afternoon.

LEIGH GASES

Andrew Johnson and Logan Mister talk during a quick break of their beach volleyball matchup against Palau yesterday afternoon.

LEIGH GASES

Tania Tan atop the podium during the awards ceremony of the 5,000m race.

LEIGH GASES

Tania Tan poses with Robin Sapong, Northern Marianas Athletics general secretary and Oceania Athletics president, after the awards ceremony of her 5,000m race Monday night

LeBron suffers worst defeat as 76ers rout Lakers by 44 points.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Pikaboo succeeds Cuki in Expert Class.

PAGE 18

Redemption, records set by Tan in 5,000m

By LEIGH GASES
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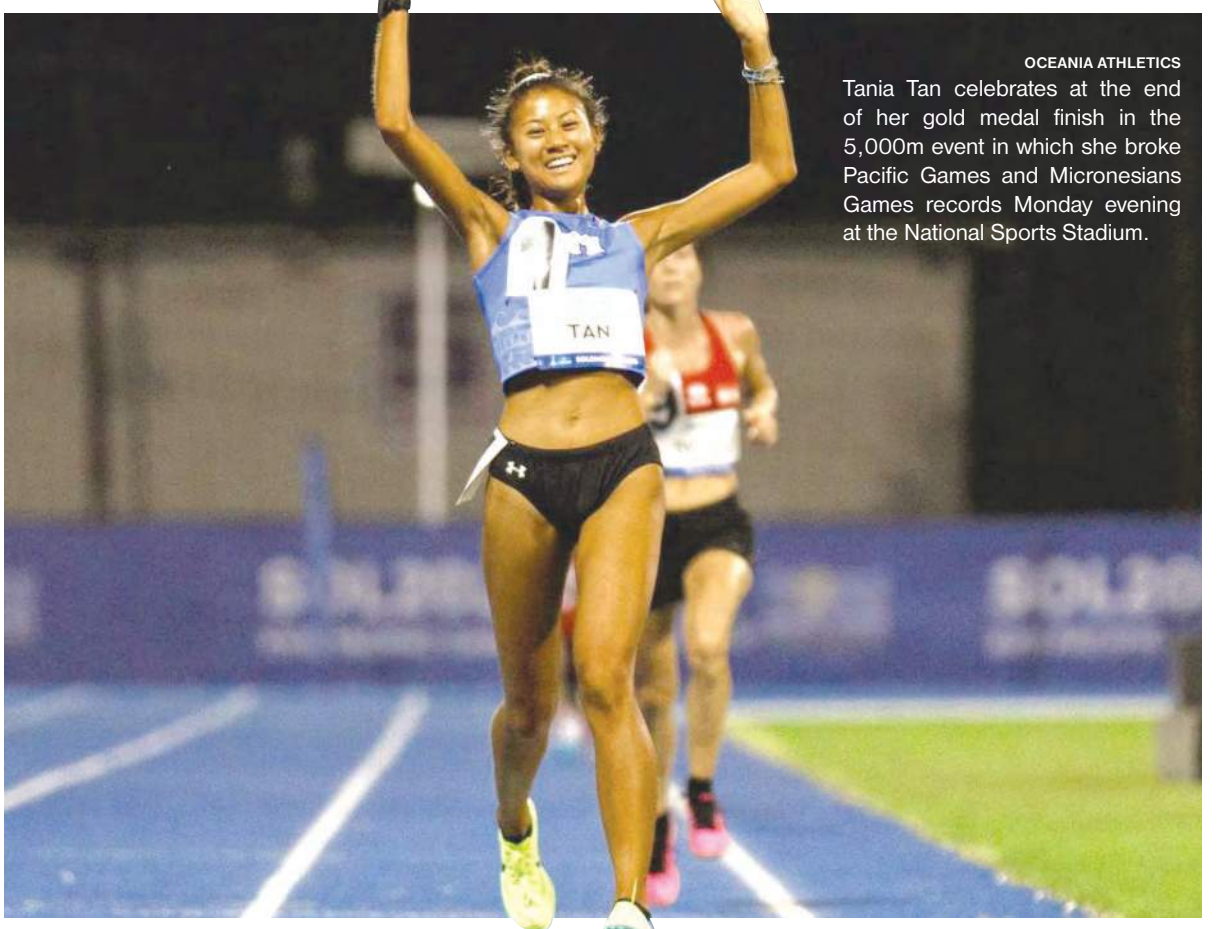
REPORTER

HONIARA, Solomon Islands—Gold, check; NMI and Pacific Games record, double check; redemption, triple check.

Redemption was all that mattered to track star Tania Tan as she ran 12.5 laps around the National Sports Stadium into first place and into the hearts of many last Monday night.

Clocking in at 18:08.69, the University of Hawaii master's student had a commanding lead over a dozen other athletes throughout the race, with silver medalist Papua New Guinea's Scholastica Herman a good 30 seconds behind her at 18:30.93. Bronze went to New Caledonia's Deborah Kaboer at 19:03.46.



OCEANIA ATHLETICS
Tania Tan celebrates at the end of her gold medal finish in the 5,000m event in which she broke Pacific Games and Micronesians Games records Monday evening at the National Sports Stadium.

To top it off, her time broke the old Pacific Games 5,000m standard of 18:20.09 set by Solomon Islands' Sharon Firisua in the 2015 Pacific Games. Tan also reset the Micronesian Games record of 18:51.75 that was set in 2014 by Christina Wicker in Palau.

From not finishing her 10,000m race in the 2022 Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games and being sent to the ER, the 22-year-old said this time around—not being sent to the ER was her main motivation—and redemption came in swift and sweet.

"I was trying to hang on and not go to the ER last like year. But I was like, 'go big, or go home. You have nothing to lose Tania. Last year, you didn't even finish the race, so at least finish this," she said.

Tan added that her win "feels surreal." She said it felt even more so when they played the CNMI national anthem for everyone to hear during the ceremony. "It's not only for me—it's for everyone back home too and I'm so super happy," she said with an emotional look in her eyes.

On breaking not only the CNMI record but also the Pacific Games record, she said she is "extremely honored." She said she didn't even know she broke the record until breakfast yesterday morning.

"I want to thank everyone back home for constantly supporting and cheering us on," said Tan. She added that so far in the Solomons, "it's been pretty good. Everyone here has been really nice and welcoming."

Throughout her race, Team NMI cheered her on from the stands and exploded into an even louder cheer as she crossed the finish line first. Tan couldn't even catch a breather as right after, local media couldn't wait to get a word about her win.

Tan arrived in the Solomons last Nov. 25 along with beach volleyball's Logan Mister and Andrew Johnson and is leaving with the team on Dec. 3 via charter back to Saipan.

She is set to compete in the 10,000m race later today.

With Day 1 of athletics out of the way, three other NMI athletes took to the track and broke their own personal best times.

Casey Cruz went up first for the NMI's athletics team in the women's 100m race and set a new best time of 13.07 seconds and came close to finishing third in her heat. She said of the race, "for my first off-island competition, it was a really humbling experience. It was something new to me because I was going up against other people that I don't normally go up against."

Theodore Rodgers also broke his personal best in the men's 100m race with a time of 11.52 seconds. He said that it was an "amazing competition…

See REDEMPTION on Page 18

Beach v'ball duo smacks way to win vs Palau

By LEIGH GASES
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REPORTER

Logan Mister and Andrew Johnson are back at it on the sands as they breezed through Palau in two quick sets, 21-13, 21-9, in the first day of beach volleyball competitions yesterday afternoon at the SIFF Academy.

Although it's beach volleyball, it's sans beach as they play on just outdoor courts filled with sand. It doesn't matter just as sand is felt underfoot and Mister and Johnson made light work of Palau for a quick 30-minute match.

Johnson and Mister snaked and weaved through the sand with ease and brought Palau's Sojy Blelas and Texxon Taro to their knees. Mister, with his height set up the blocks as much as he could and attacked with precise kills as Johnson set up the plays and served strong.

The NMI duo coasted through the second set, 6-1, and Palau didn't have much of a fight from there. Only 3 more points landed for Palau while Johnson and Mister took it all the way home to win by 12 points.

Johnson said after their match, "The competition was good. We played Palau in the Mini Games but they did have a new member, so it was a little tough to see what he was like. His partner was really good from what we remember last. We were expecting a win, but I think the first set could've been a little bit better, but now that's done, we're ready for Tonga."

He added that it felt "great" to win. "Our first game jitters are gone, so we're ready for the next one."

Mister said of the pool they're playing in, "I feel like we have a pretty tough pool. We're pretty confident against Pa-

See BEACH on Page 18

LEIGH GASES
NMI's Logan Mister reaches for a block against Palau during their match yesterday afternoon at SIFF Academy.

2023 PACIFIC GAMES MEDAL STANDINGS

(As of November 28, 2023 | 6:30PM)

COUNTRY	GOLD	SILVER	BRONZE	TOTAL
New Caledonia	63	40	41	144
Tahiti	30	33	39	102
Australia	29	19	8	56
Samoa	28	16	12	56
Fiji	12	16	18	46
Solomon Islands	10	20	13	43
Papua New Guinea	9	15	15	39
New Zealand	7	6	9	22
Cook Islands	5	3	4	12
Marshall Islands	5	3	2	10
Guam	4	4	2	10
Northern Mariana Islands	4	1	6	11
FSM	3	1	0	4
Kiribati	3	0	4	7
Nauru	2	11	6	19
Vanuatu	2	3	5	10
Tonga	1	4	6	11
Wallis and Futuna	0	3	4	7
Tuvalu	0	3	0	3
American Samoa	0	2	2	4
Palau	0	0	3	3
Norfolk Island	0	0	1	1
Niue	0	0	0	0
Tokelau	0	0	0	0

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